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THE principal facts of the life of John Charles Frémont have been brought out by earlier biographers, but never before has there been a definitive interpretation of his adventurous and kaleidoscopic career. More extensive source materials than have been available to former investigators have allowed Goodwin to examine and re-evaluate the forces which brought the man his contemporary prominence—and criticism. Of special note is the new light which is here thrown upon Frémont's participation in two important events that have been linked inseparably with his name—the Bear Flag Revolt of California, and the fraudulent war contracts and railroad scandals of the Civil War and following years. This book does not belong with the new school of “fictionized” biography. It represents a definite addition to existing knowledge of the man Frémont, and of the epoch of American life encompassed in the period of his active career.



JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT

AN EXPLANATION OF HIS CAREER

BY

CARDINAL GOODWIN

Professor of American History at Mills College

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THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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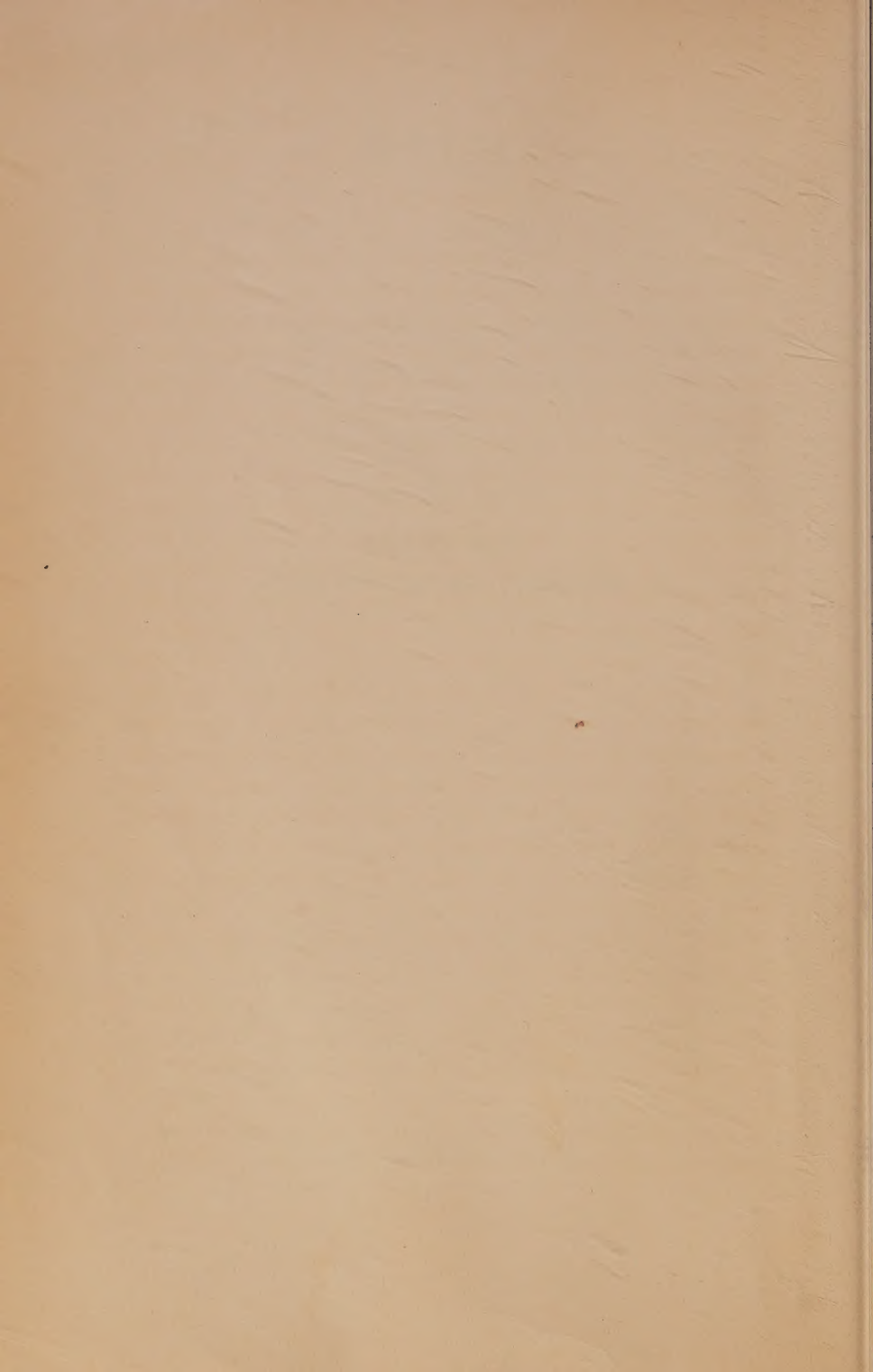
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TO
DAN CROSBY
PHYSICIAN, BENEFACTOR, FRIEND



PREFACE

Six lives of Frémont have been published. Three of these appeared in 1856, when he ran for president as the first candidate of the present Republican party. The fourth was written by a man particularly interested in exploration and was intended primarily to give an adequate account of Frémont's work in that field. In this respect Dr. Dellenbaugh's volume is unsurpassed. The fifth, by Mr. Herbert Bashford, is an uncritical presentation of old ideas and old materials. Mr. Nevins, author of the sixth, has used more extensive material than the others and has produced a literary biography of considerable interest. He is not willing to admit that the family papers used by him have colored his point of view, but the completed work indicates that they have.

The principal facts of Frémont's life have been brought out in the foregoing works, but there is still a place for a more definitive interpretation of his career than they afford. This volume is intended to supply that need. Its chief purpose, then, is to explain the influences and forces which brought him prominence and to evaluate the part he actually played in the public and private enterprises with which his name has been associated. A careful examination of more extensive materials dealing with the subject than have been used by former investigators has resulted in two special contributions. The first has involved subtracting some of the credit formerly given Frémont for the part he played in such well-known episodes as the Bear Flag revolt and the conquest of California, and to place squarely upon him the responsibility for the disaster which concluded his last expedition. The second contribu-

tion consists of presenting a more complete account of his connection with the fraudulent contracts made in Missouri during the Civil War while he was in charge of the Department of the West, and of giving, for the first time, an account of his participation in the railroad scandals of the post-war period.

In pursuing this study I have been brought into pleasant relations with many people and have been placed under varying degrees of obligation to friends and acquaintances in several institutions, but none of those people are in any way responsible for opinions and appraisals found in this volume. Former members of my classes at Mills College, at Stanford University, at the University of Iowa Summer School, and at Syracuse University may recognize opinions or conclusions which were brought out in discussions associated with topics presented by them in my seminars. Members of the staff of the Bancroft Library at the University of California gave me unrestricted access to the rich store of materials with which that institution is provided, and Mr. Joseph Hill secured for my use the old account books of the Mariposa Mining Company of San Francisco. He also read the Bibliographical Note and made valuable suggestions.

To Dr. Benjamin F. Shambaugh and to Miss Ruth A. Gallaher of the Iowa State Historical Society, to Captain R. B. Haselden, Keeper of the Manuscripts of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, to Mrs. D. Basil W. Alexander of the Los Angeles Public Library, to Dr. Thomas Lynch Montgomery and Miss Mary M. Townsend of the State Historical Society of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, to Miss Stella Drumm of the Missouri Historical Society at St. Louis, and to members of the

staff of the Congressional Library at Washington I am indebted for generous courtesies.

In the Public Library of New York City I found some very valuable materials and received most helpful consideration from the efficient members of its Reference Department.

Professor St. George L. Sioussat of the History Department of the University of Pennsylvania called my attention to important manuscripts at Philadelphia and at the Huntington Library.

Dr. Lucy Hazard of Mills College, Dr. Clarence John DuFour of the State Teachers' College of San Francisco, and Professor John C. Parish of the History Department of the University of California at Los Angeles read the manuscript and aided with their suggestions. To my colleague, Mr. Francis H. Herrick, I am indebted for assistance in the drudgery of proofreading. Miss Flora Belle Ludington, Reference Librarian of Mills College, prepared the index. My wife typed the entire work and assisted me in other ways.

Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes has been interested in the study from its inception. During many pleasant luncheon hours with Professor Herbert E. Bolton of the University of California it has been a subject of conversation, and I have been stimulated by his comments.

I wish to record my special obligation to President Aurelia Henry Reinhardt of Mills College, who, profoundly interested in research carried on by members of her faculty, cheerfully co-operates in arranging schedules which will permit them to pursue such studies.

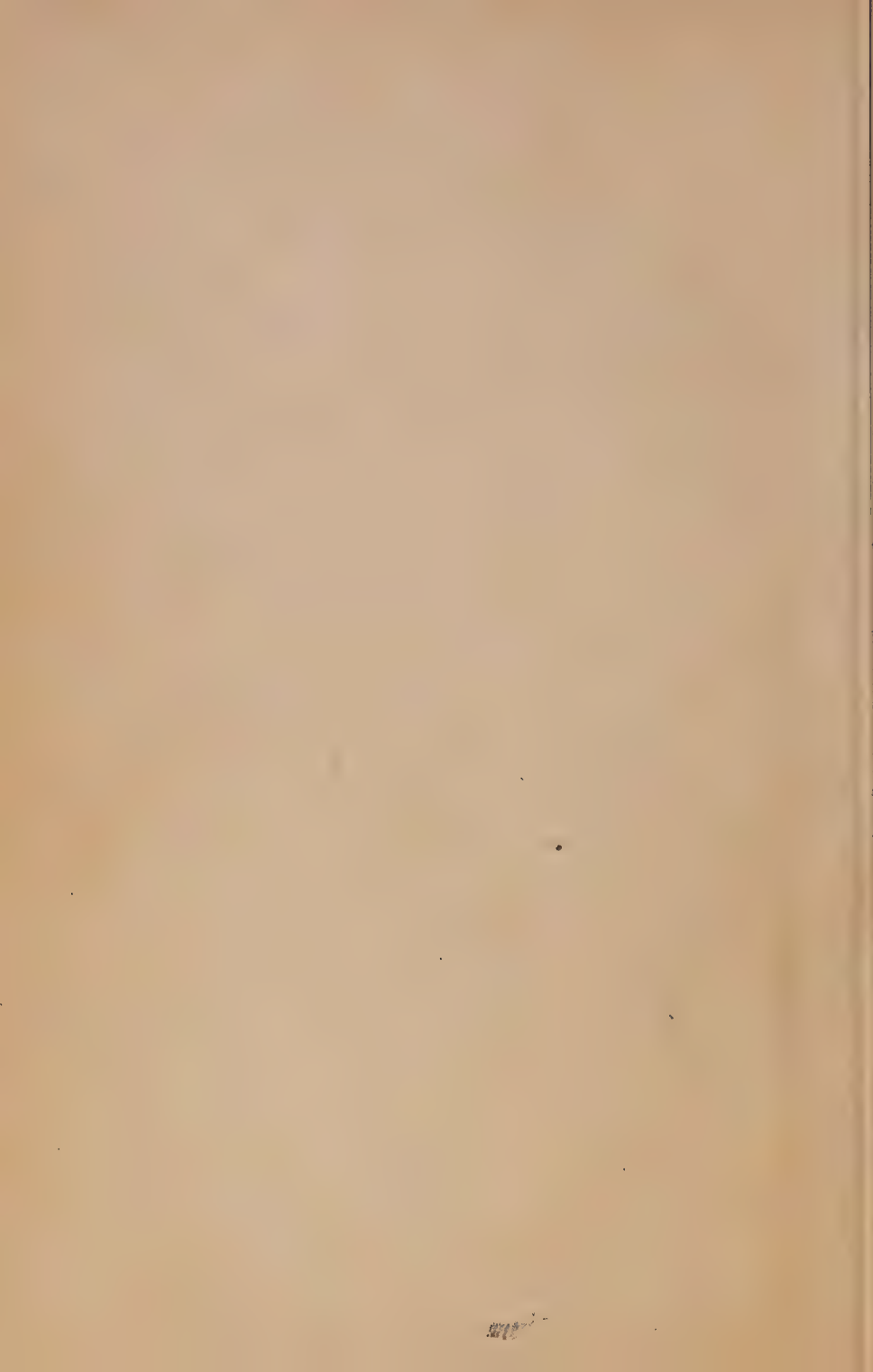
C. G.

MILLS COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA
April 29, 1930



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JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT

AN EXPLANATION OF HIS CAREER

I. PARENTAGE AND YOUTH

The mother of John Charles Frémont was Anne Beverly Whiting, member of a prominent Virginia family and youngest daughter of Colonel Thomas Whiting, who attained some celebrity while serving in the Virginia House of Burgesses and as an officer during the American Revolution. Although Whiting was a man of considerable wealth in his day, no part of his fortune ever came to Anne Whiting. The Colonel died while she was an infant and she was brought up by a married sister.

Adverse days came. The family experienced poverty and Anne Whiting married to escape this penniless state. At the age of seventeen, in 1799, she became the bride of John Pryor, who was rich—and over sixty-five years old. Probably the girl never loved the man she married. Certainly she gave no evidence of affection after the unnatural union. Discontented, she was ready to—and did—throw up everything when the right man came along, about twelve years after the marriage.

Of Charles Frémont, the father of John Charles Frémont, little is known. That he was an adventurer, pure and simple, there is no doubt. In quest of new experiences he left his native France for the New World, but he selected an unfortunate time, for he sailed during the Napoleonic Wars and fell into the hands of the British. He saw the inside of military prisons, for he was held captive for some time in the West Indies.

He was destitute when he finally landed in Virginia during the early days of the nineteenth century and se-

cured a position in an academy which was directed by Louis Girardin at Richmond. Although associated with this respectable institution, his quest for adventure continued to dominate his life. He was dismissed from the academy for living with a woman to whom he had not been married; but the value of his services seems to have surpassed the resentment aroused by his irregularities, for he was re-employed.

During this time he met Anne Pryor. The circumstances of their meeting are of no consequence, but it is important to know that their relations became too intimate to pass the exacting social censorship of those times. Rumors reached Major Pryor and led that old gentleman to investigate the behavior of his young wife. Apparently his suspicions were supported by the evidence; at least, his wife ran off with Charles Frémont, and on July 12, 1811, the *Virginia Patriot* published the following:

Whereas my wife Anne has totally alienated her affections from me by the vile and insidious machinations of an execrable monster of baseness and depravity, with whom I have recently discovered she has for sometime past indulged a criminal intercourse, and has in consequence thereof abandoned my bed and board, for the protection of her seducer, with whom I have reason to believe she has gone off, therefore forfeiting all claims to my support; I deem it necessary, in order to guard against imposition which may be practised on me, to warn all persons not to trust or credit my said wife on my account, as I am determined not to become responsible for any debts which she may contract.

And so Anne Whiting, whose life had been cramped and repressed for twelve years, chose to follow a penniless adventurer whom she loved rather than remain the wife of an old man for whom she had no affection. The elopers

were never married, but their ardent attachment was not dampened by the illicit nature of their relations.

The next few years they spent wandering over the country, a good deal of the time among Indians of the Old Southwest. On or about January 21, 1813, while they were resting somewhere in South Carolina or Georgia—Savannah, Georgia, is usually given as the place—the first child, John Charles, was born. But they were soon on the road again, and about nine months later were quartered in a public inn at Nashville, Tennessee.

To one familiar with the West there is no frontier community of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century more intimately associated with eminent leaders than the little village which became the beautiful city of Nashville. The name itself suggests a roll of prominent pioneers: Judge Richard Henderson, John Donelson, James Robertson, Felix Grundy, Sam Houston, John Bell, Thomas Hart Benton, Andrew Jackson. Jackson's home, the Hermitage, near Nashville, is still a mecca for tourists, and during the lifetime of its owner the people of Tennessee prided themselves on the number of prominent characters entertained within its walls.

In the fall of 1813, when the Frémonts drove into town, there was but a smattering of the prestige and recognition which was to give the place its position among the cities of the South. It was just a small town of approximately two thousand people,¹ set on the bluff overlooking the Cumberland River, with its town square, post

¹ H. W. Crew, *History of Nashville, with a Full Outline of the Natural Advantages, Accounts of the Mound Builders, Indian Tribes, Early Settlement, Organization of the Mero District, and General and Particular History of the City Down to the Present Time*, 1890, chapter 7. Nashville had been incorporated in 1806.

office, and two inns as the principal centers of interest. And, as in all typical frontier villages, the life of the people ran in quiet channels common to border folk. Their tastes, their habits, their amusements, and their interests were simple and primitive. For days at a time one might loll in the peace of such a community without seeing as much as a cockfight disturb its quiet.

This was Nashville of the early days of September 1813, when the Frémonts established themselves at the City Hotel, facing the square. Their appearance created scarcely a ripple on the placid surface of town life; but a day or two later two men appeared who roused the community from its stupor and, in the excitement that followed, brought the life of the infant Frémont into indirect and rather perilous contact for the first time with the life of the man who was later to become his father-in-law. The man was Thomas Hart Benton. That he arrived at about the same time as Andrew Jackson indicated trouble. With Benton was his brother, Jesse, while Jackson was accompanied by a friend, Colonel Coffee.

The hostility between Benton and Jackson was of recent origin. They had been intimate, and Jackson felt more than usual reluctance in breaking this friendship because it was rooted in gratitude for kindly acts performed for him by Benton's mother during those trying days when he was struggling alone in North Carolina. The break would not have occurred if a certain faction in Nashville had not become aggressively hostile toward a friend of Jackson's, a recent arrival, and drawn Jesse Benton into the quarrel.

The subject of controversy was a huge, lumbering young giant by the name of William Carroll. Men of his own age were intolerantly jealous of Carroll's growing

popularity with Jackson. Realizing that any attempt to influence "Old Hickory" would only drive Jackson closer to the subject of their hate, they concentrated their attention on Carroll. A more timid man could have been bullied into leaving the community, but threats did not move Carroll. In such cases the last resort was to provoke a duel, and to this they directed their efforts. Jesse Benton was finally put forward as Carroll's opponent. Carroll found it impossible to secure a second among the young men of his acquaintance; and when Jackson learned that the duel was part of a scheme to rid the community of his protégé, he consented to act as his young friend's aide. While he was doing this Thomas Hart Benton was returning from Washington where he had been laboring to get a military appointment and to collect some money from the government for Jackson.

The duel was a comparatively harmless affair. It would have been entirely so if Jesse Benton, after shooting first, had not stooped as his opponent fired, thus receiving a flesh wound across the lower extremity of his vertebrae.

Letters from Jesse gave Thomas Benton an exaggerated account of the affair and the latter wrote Jackson denouncing him in offensive terms for his part in the fight. Before crowds in Knoxville and at other places Benton asserted that Jackson had conducted the duel in a "savage, unequal, unfair, and base manner."² Charges and countercharges were made, until Jackson could control himself no longer and with an oath declared he would horsewhip Tom Benton the first time he met him. Jackson rode into Nashville on the evening of September 3, 1813, and took lodgings at the Nashville Inn, just across

² James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, I, 389.

the square from the City Hotel where the Bentons and the Frémonts were quartered.

The next morning as Coffee and Jackson crossed the square to the post office, they saw Tom Benton standing in the doorway of the City Hotel glaring at them.

"Do you see that fellow?" Coffee asked.

"I have my eye on him," was the laconic reply.

Securing their mail they turned back, following the sidewalk. As they came in front of Benton, Jackson turned quickly, and, with whip in hand, warned that gentleman to defend himself. Benton retreated backward through the hall, fumbling for his pistol, while Jackson followed with a pistol in one hand and his whip in the other, endeavoring to get close enough to lash his opponent. As they passed a side door, Jesse Benton, unobserved by Jackson, came out, emptied his pistol into Jackson's shoulder, and brought him to the floor with a painful wound. This attracted Coffee, who with one or two others entered the fray, firing a few shots. In backing away, Tom Benton fell headlong down a flight of stairs, and Jesse received a few flesh wounds from a dagger in the hands of Stokely Hays, a nephew of Mrs. Jackson.

During the *mêlée*, according to tradition, one of the bullets tore through a wall of the room which was occupied by the Frémonts and their baby.

We do not know how long the Frémonts lived in Nashville. They may have remained a month or they may have lingered until the frosts came in late autumn. At any rate they were there until a second child, a daughter, was born, and then they moved to Virginia. With their arrival in the Old Dominion the protracted wanderings of these road habitués seem to have ended.

Again the curtain drops, and when it is lifted Charles Frémont is dead. As a heritage he left the woman with whom he had eloped a third child and poverty. He also left plans for moving his family to France. This scheme an older brother, who happened to be in Norfolk at the time and who was about to return to his native land, offered to carry out; but the mother refused to go.

Of the life of young Frémont during the next ten years or so we know very little. He dismissed the period by saying that in the earlier part of his career he had seen few things worthy of note. The mother moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and placed her older son in a law office, in charge of a Scotchman, Dr. John Robertson. Frémont soon earned the respect of his patron, thereby opening the way for educational advantages which were to be of infinite value later.

During the years 1827 and 1828 he made phenomenal progress, judging by the reminiscences of Dr. Robertson, written about 1850. Frémont astonished him by acquiring knowledge easily, captivated him with his virtue, modesty, and gentlemanly conduct, and convinced him that he would ultimately attain fame. Dr. Robertson even discovered a "genius for poetic composition" in the lad.

While due allowance must be made for his tutor's fulsome praise, there is reason to believe that Frémont ranked high among his schoolmates. At the close of his year with Dr. Robertson he entered the junior class of Charleston College, with conditions in some of the subjects. The interest in his studies, revealed to his tutor, was carried with him into his early college life; but it proved to be superficially curious rather than profound. He lacked the staying qualities essential to good scholarship, and after he had satisfied his early curiosity he be-

came indolent. His studies were neglected. There were intervals of idleness, followed by studious spurts during which he would "catch up with the class." But the idleness seems to have increased and the "spurts" to have become less frequent, until the faculty, a few months before he was expected to graduate, expelled him from the college. He left cheerfully and without regrets.

"The college authorities," he says, "had wrapped themselves in their dignity, and reluctantly but sternly inflicted on me condign punishment. To me this came like summer wind, that breathed over something sweeter than the 'bank whereon the wild thyme blows.' I smiled to myself while I listened to words about the disappointment of friends and the broken career. I was living in a charmed atmosphere and their edict only gave me complete freedom. What the poets dwell on as 'the rarest flower of life' had bloomed in my path—only seventeen, I was passionately in love. This was what made me regardless of discipline and careless of consequence. This was the true rebel that carried me off to pleasant days and returned me at night to hard work in order to catch up with my class next morning."

As Frémont wrote of these early experiences in his *Memoirs*, over fifty years later, they stood out in his memory as the "bit of sunshine that made the glory of my youth."

The occasion of this reminiscence was a Creole by the name of Cecilia. She was one of a family of three girls and two boys who had escaped the massacres in Santo Domingo following the attempt of the French to suppress the uprising under Toussaint L'Ouverture at the beginning of the century. The girls "were all unusually handsome [as if an old man in a reflective mood ever

dreamed of an early sweetheart who was not!]
—clear brunette complexions, large dark eyes, and abundant blue-black hair.” With Cecilia and her brothers Frémont whiled away happy hours before and after he left college. Through the woods back of the town and over the islands in the bay they went “gunning or picnicking”; or “sometimes in a sailboat on the bay, oftener going over the bar to seaward and not infrequently, when the breeze failed us, getting dangerously near the breakers on the bar.” These were the splendid outside days over which his memory loved to linger, and he was grateful that he did not have to return to those scenes as an enemy during the dark period of the Civil War.

About this time Frémont made the acquaintance of a man whose influence was instrumental in securing employment for him and later starting him on his career. This was Joel Roberts Poinsett. Although a South Carolinian by birth, Poinsett’s Huguenot ancestry, combined with his New England training and his extensive travels in Europe, Asia, and America, had relieved him of pronounced sectional inclinations.

His interest in botany and his work in it resulted in his name being attached to a Mexican flower known to science as *Poinsettia pulcherrima* and to laymen throughout the world as the large, red flower so generally used in Christmas decorations. He had also to his credit a few articles and speeches which were intended to encourage the promotion of science in general. We do not know how much Frémont’s love of plant life was quickened by Poinsett’s influence, but this mutual interest warmed the attachment of the two, and in the older man the younger won a powerful supporter.

This influence was exerted in the realm of government

rather than in the field of science. Poinsett had represented the United States in South America and Mexico on special occasions between 1810 and 1824, and was appointed minister to the latter country by John Quincy Adams in 1825. Upon his return from Mexico in 1829, Frémont's acquaintance with him began. With the assistance of Poinsett, but against his advice, Frémont secured a position as teacher of mathematics on board the sloop of war "Natchez," bound for the coast of South America. One of the officers was Lieutenant, later Admiral, David Glasgow Farragut. The cruise gave Frémont an opportunity to visit the important coast cities of South America and brought him into superficial contact with Spanish-American life. He felt later that Poinsett's advice had been sound, and that he had spent a great deal of time without adding anything of practical value to preparation for life.

Upon returning from the cruise Frémont came back to Charleston. Meanwhile Congress had established a post of professor of mathematics in the Navy, the position to be filled from a list made up of candidates who had passed examinations qualifying them to occupy such a position. Frémont spent a pleasant month studying for these. "All day long I was at my books, and the earliest dawn found me at an upper window against which stood a tall poplar, where the rustling of the glossy leaves made a soothing accompaniment. The surroundings go for a great deal in intellectual work."

He passed the examination, was offered the position, and declined it. Something more interesting had developed. This was an opportunity to go into the West.



Map showing various claims and boundaries of Texas and surrounding regions. Texas claimed to the Rio Grande as the original Mexican State was shown as given by the more open line. Reprinted from *Frontiers of Texas*, published and © G. F. Tarran's Sons, New York and London, 1914.



II. SERVING AN APPRENTICESHIP

Life at sea did not afford an opportunity for the kind of physical action suited to Frémont's habits, and a professional position was equally distasteful to him. He preferred the land, where he could wander at will through sparsely or totally uninhabited areas and where restraints were limited to such things as Nature in her various moods had established. An opportunity to satisfy this preference attracted his attention at this time.

In 1837 a survey was begun for a railroad which was to connect Charleston with Cincinnati, and Frémont was engaged to participate in this work. The topographical corps to which he was assigned worked in the mountains of western South Carolina and eastern Tennessee. Experiences of those months contributed little to the sum total of his life, but they left an indelible impression on his mind. In the midst of desert heat and winter snows of later years he recalled the delightful summer weather of the Carolina and Tennessee mountains, and on occasions when thirst and hunger preyed upon him he remembered the fresh, cool streams "lined with azaleas" and the quantities of "milk and honey and many good things to eat" with which the rustic table had been laden at the close of those peaceful days.

These duties, which he looked upon, at least in memory, as a "kind of picnic," ended all too quickly, and he returned to Charleston with no particular plans. But he had not been there long before he was ordered to join Captain Williams as his assistant in a military reconnaissance of territory occupied by the Cherokee Indians. This was after the Indians had been moved to territory beyond

the Mississippi. Here Frémont turned his hand for the first time to a task which was to occupy the prime of his life—work among the Indian tribes throughout the great West.

His introduction to Indian life was a memorable and not too pleasant one. The little party approached an Indian village on the Nantahéylè River, in Cherokee country, from which they were to conduct their work. They arrived after dark, tired and hungry from a long day's journey, to find a startling scene.

All day the village had been feasting and carousing. The braves were boisterously, riotously drunk, brawling and shooting in a dangerous mood. Sober, these Indians were friendly enough, but when inflamed by whiskey they were quarrelsome and their village was not a safe place for white men.

In this emergency the party found friends in the squaws of the village. They guided the white men to a log cabin filled with shucked corn and hid them there for the night. Despite their fatigue, sleep was denied Frémont and his companions. All night long the roistering braves kept up a spasmodic volley of shots. The late night and early morning were bitterly cold. And to add to their discomfort, huge rats, infesting the corn-filled cabin, scampered over their prostrate bodies.

The next morning, after the excitement had died down, they ventured forth in safety. They bathed in the icy water of the river and Frémont's hair "froze in fretful quills." That was his initiation.

The work was not unpleasant, however. The party was constantly on the move. When near enough to cabins, they always sought accommodations beneath their roofs, but frequently they slept in "half-faced" tents warmed

and lighted by great fires of hickory logs at their feet. Certainly this was not "a kind of a picnic" as Frémont's previous summer had been, but he enjoyed it. His particular assignment was the task of making a reconnaissance of the Hiwassee River, a beautiful stream emptying into the Tennessee, but his most profitable experience was gained through the opportunity afforded him to study Indian life through intimate contact with the natives.

He missed no phases of it. He saw the savage as well as the peaceful side. He saw occasional "bloody frays"—battles between Indians armed with knives in which ugly body wounds were inflicted and hands were badly cut, as a fighter sought to grasp the blade of his opponent's weapon to put it out of action while he wielded his own knife. He acquired a deep admiration for the brute courage of the Indians and their stoic indifference to physical pain. But he learned that, in the main, they lived quietly, cultivating their farms.

As a training school for later explorations, that winter among the Cherokees was important. The knack of determining direction by woods growth and the bark of trees, the proper locating of a camp to protect a sleeper from the dangers of a forest night, animal habits and characteristics, the husbanding and replenishing of scanty food supplies—these and many other important lessons came into his woodland schooling. But the time was not occupied entirely with the observations of Indian life, surveyor's instruments, and woodcraft during that winter. There was an *affaire d'amour* in which young Frémont played an unfortunate part. He seems to have inherited his father's susceptibility to women, and this particular incident was given unpleasant publicity during the campaign of 1856.

The Cherokee survey over, Frémont returned home. The first pleasure from renewing acquaintance with old scenes was hardly begun before he received a summons to Washington. It came through the influence of his warm friend, Poinsett, who was Secretary of War. President Van Buren had appointed Frémont second lieutenant in the Topographical Corps of the United States and had ordered him to come at once to the capital.

At this time Washington was a city of "magnificent distances." Foreigners professed amusement at the large, undeveloped portions of the city provided for in the original plans when compared with the sections actually constructed. But Frances Trollope, who was there in the early 'thirties, found nothing ridiculous in the contrast. The heart of the city, then as later, was Pennsylvania Avenue. The Capitol stood at one end and the President's mansion at the other, while the intervening space was occupied with stores. A few squares on the streets which intersected Pennsylvania Avenue were covered with buildings, and beyond them and to the north were the broad commons known as "the slashes." There Hibernian milkmaids kept their cows and reared flocks of geese.

While there was but a scattered suggestion of the present magnificent capital, evidences of the transition to a new era were many. A branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, begun during Jackson's administration, gave Washington its first modern link with the outside world, bringing new travel to the city. Pennsylvania Avenue had been macadamized. In some of the homes, grates and stoves equipped to burn a new fuel, anthracite coal, had replaced the wide, deep fireplaces formerly used. Lamps filled with whale oil were taking the place of the primitive candles, except on evenings when both might be

required to give sufficient illumination. Massive mahogany furniture with haircloth upholstery was found in the homes of the well-to-do.¹

The national capital was very largely a man's city in the 'thirties. For various reasons—the expense, the inconvenience of the trip, the need for someone to remain in charge of affairs at home—representatives did not bring their families to the capital. Social life for the women was limited to the families of foreign ministers, to officers of state, and to the families of a very few wealthy Congressmen. The small theater in the city was always crowded when the elder Booth occasionally came from his farm in Maryland to delight the audience with his “matchless renderings” of Shakespeare. And once each year came the circus. There the crowds could see Herr Cline do his wonderful tightrope and slackwire stunts. Finn gave exhibitions of fancy glassblowing, and “everyone went to see the living skeleton, a tall emaciated young fellow named Calvin Edson, compared with whom Shakespeare's starved apothecary was fleshy.”²

¹ See “Reminiscences of Washington” in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vols. XLV and XLVI (January to July, 1880). The following is the chorus of a song in honor of the railroad:

“And we've no longer gee up and gee ho,

But fiz, fiz, fiz, off we go.

Nine miles to the hour,

With thirty horsepower,

By day time and night time,

Arrive at the right time,

Without jumble or rumble,

A chance of a tumble,

As in chassis, gig, or whisky,

When horses are frisky.

Oh! the merry Rail Road for me!—

Oh! the merry Rail Road for me!”

² *Ibid.*, XLV, 541-542.

Washington was a lonely place for a young man in 1838, however—particularly for a young man of Frémont's temperament. He knew but one person in the city. He was cramped and oppressed, and a feeling of homesickness kept his spirits down. Consequently, he welcomed gratefully an order which at once lifted him from the melancholy rut into which he had fallen. The order made him a member of a surveying party which was to be sent into the remote West under the leadership of the French explorer, Nicollet.

He put the city and its dull days behind. The romantic little-known was ahead. At St. Louis he joined Nicollet. Here he met Robert E. Lee for the first time, and the friendly interest of that great man made a lasting impression upon him. Busy days of preparation were accompanied by pleasant social evenings. Nicollet had many friends at St. Louis among the French Catholics, and they exerted themselves to arrange pleasant entertainment for him. The priests paid their respects to Nicollet, and at the suppers given in the refectory Frémont soon became an established figure.

In preparation for the expedition Nicollet and his party received invaluable advice from fur traders who had traveled and trapped over the country to be examined. Suggestions as to necessary equipment were of great help to the prospective explorers. The fur-trading house of Chouteau was particularly helpful with suggestions and directions, and its representatives, out on the frontier, later added accommodations and information.

Henry Sibley's, a frontier trading-post at the mouth of the Minnesota River and on the west bank of the Mississippi, was the point from which the real work of the expedition began. Sibley was an agent for the St. Louis

Company in that part of the Mississippi Valley. Coming with Chouteau's favor and support, Nicollet was given a cordial welcome.

This frontier post was the real border land. On the east bank of the Mississippi lived a few white settlers, but when one crossed the stream he entered the Indian country. A village of the Sioux tribe was established in the vicinity, and it was in this village that Frémont saw the most beautiful Indian maiden he ever met; so beautiful was she that forty years afterward he still remembered the name of "Ampetuwashtoy" ("Beautiful Day").

During the few weeks of preparation Frémont gained a new insight into life on the frontier by joining in the activities of Sibley's post. But Nicollet did not join him. None of these things interested the Frenchman. To him the stir of frontier life had no attractions. He was too completely absorbed in preparations for his expedition to divide his attention. Day after day he spent in study of the geography of the country, of the picturesque Indian names of lakes, rivers, and landmarks, and of earlier French explorations.

According to their program there were to be two surveys of this northwest country. The first one was to connect Nicollet's former survey of the upper Mississippi River with the watershed of the Missouri to the westward, and the other was to be a survey of the valley of the upper part of the latter stream. The country through which they were to travel was sufficiently open and level to enable them to use one-horse carts for transporting the necessary equipment. These were placed under the control of Canadians who had been in the employment of the fur company. Once under way, the party traveled up the south bank of the Minnesota River for more than a hundred miles,

passing several Indian camps en route. The country was fertile, the river valley beautiful, and the Indian life a source of never failing interest. The moon and the stars were made allies by the exploring party in their work; each night when they pitched camp they would establish the course of the river by astronomical observations.

The first goal of this expedition was a trading-post at the bend of the Minnesota River at a place called "Traverse des Sioux" by Frémont. Here the party crossed the Minnesota and followed the stream to the mouth of the Cottonwood River, and there crossing again they ascended the Cottonwood to its headwaters. A few days were spent "mapping" the country in the lower parts of what Frémont called the "Coteau des Prairies." This, he says, was a plateau which separated the waters flowing into the Missouri from those emptying into the Mississippi. The goal in this vicinity was the "Red Pipe Stone Quarry," about twenty miles south of Lake Benton. From this western terminus of their explorations they were to turn directly north. But they were to go a short distance only. They were to stop for a few days with a French Canadian named Renville. He was a border chief who exercised a controlling influence over the Indian tribes as far north as the Canadian boundary, and his approval assured the traveler a cordial reception among the tribes throughout that section.

Hospitality in this region was of the most cordial kind, as well it should have been, since contact with the outside world was maintained in this way to a considerable extent. Strangers brought news, and they brought the excitement that comes with the introduction of novelty.

The few days spent at Renville's were filled with interest and pleasure for Frémont. After visiting the lakes in

the neighborhood, mapping these, and collecting the information required regarding the Indians and the country, the party turned eastward to the mouth of the Minnesota. On the return they made surveys of the Lesueur and the Blue Earth rivers, after which they arrived at Sibley's frontier post, where the first expedition for surveying this region ended.

But Frémont did not leave the region at once. Sibley organized an extended hunting party, taking with him a whole village of Indians and members of his own company from the fur-trading post. Frémont joined the party. It was in the month of November when the elk and deer were plentiful and in splendid condition, and the hunters traveled through a rolling country, well watered and sparsely timbered. Each morning the chief of the Indian village would designate the site for the evening camp and there the party would gather, when the day's hunt was over, to see "bright fires, where fat venison was roasting on sticks . . . or stewing with corn or wild rice in pots hanging from tripods." Squaws were busy over the cooking and children rolled about the ground. "No sleep is better or more restoring than follows such a dinner earned by such a day." One of these days while on the march a squaw dropped behind the main party, and a few hours later came into camp bringing a new-born child.

The work in this region over, the party returned to St. Louis to make preparations for explorations farther west. Arrangements had been made to have men from the explored regions join the new expedition at the James River. At St. Louis some equipment was provided and a few experienced men were engaged.

Early in April 1839, the reorganized party took passage on one of the American Fur Company boats. By taking

advantage of the annual rise of the Missouri they thought the ascent would be easier. But the current was exceptionally strong and for two months and a half they bucked the stream. So swift was the current that occasionally the boat would stand perfectly still, barely holding her own against the rush of water. The difficulty was increased by the appearance of ugly snags, through which it was necessary to feel out a slow, laborious passage. The point from which explorations were to begin—Fort Pierre—was reached on the seventieth day, a distance of approximately thirteen hundred miles from St. Louis. Their progress upstream had been made at an average speed of less than nineteen miles a day.

A few weeks were spent here in completing preparations, writing up journals, and locating their position. The establishment of proper relations with the Indians was highly important. A large tribe of the Yankton Sioux were within a few miles of the camp, and arrangements were made for an exchange of visits. To conduct members of Nicollet's party to the village an imposing party of thirty chiefs was sent out. The reception was cordial and was accompanied by all the elaborate formalities observed by these Indians. Their proximity to the post of the American Fur Company was indicated by their dress, particularly that of the girls. The latter were well clothed. The neatly dressed skins which they used for the greater part of their attire were decorated with beads and other materials secured at the trading-post. With the buffalo hunting-grounds convenient in one direction and the trading-post close at hand in another ready to buy all the skins and hides they produced, this tribe lived in a "happy hunting ground" on earth.

A few days later, when Nicollet had about completed

preparations, a chief from this same village came into camp accompanied by a "pretty" eighteen-year-old girl. She was elaborately garbed in the decorated skins worn by a belle of the prairies, and they came to Nicollet's quarters accompanied by an interpreter. Frémont was there at the time assisting in some map work.

With an air of dignity befitting the gift, the interpreter-chieftain calmly informed Nicollet that the young lady was being presented to him for a wife as a token of respect and esteem. It was an embarrassing and delicate moment for Nicollet, but he courteously managed an in-offensive rejection by explaining that he had a wife already and that the Great Father (the United States Government) would not permit him to have another.

Either an imp of mischief entered Nicollet's head just then, or he was seriously offering a sacrifice to the good will of the Sioux, for, pointing to Frémont, he told the interpreter that the "young chief" had no mate. But Frémont was not to be trapped so easily. With careful tact he explained that he was greatly flattered by the offer, but that he was going far away and would not return and did not like to take the girl from her people. As an expression of his gratitude, he pressed upon the girl presents of bright-colored cloth, beads, and a mirror. Through the whole conversation, the rejected bride was the most unconcerned person in the room. She leaned quietly against the doorpost, displaying no emotion at either proposal or rejection.

The little party was now ready to begin the work for which it had been organized. At the Fort they had obtained horses, carts, provisions, guides, and interpreters. An addition of six men, two of whom were on their way to the Red River settlement of the North and wished to

travel with the party for safety and companionship, gave them a company of nineteen. To carry the equipment they had ten carts and more than thirty horses. The entire expedition crossed to the east bank of the Missouri River and established camp at the foot of some hills. But Frémont was not to spend the night in this camp.

Members of the party who had ascended the hills above the camp returned in great excitement to report the appearance of a herd of buffalo coming down the river for water. A buffalo hunt was an experience Frémont had eagerly anticipated. There was a rush for the hunting horses, guns were inspected hastily, handkerchiefs were bound "fillet-like" about their heads, and the men were off.

In such an undertaking a great deal depended upon the horses. Frémont's was a hunter, well trained in the service, which made it possible for him to forget the horse and to devote his attention to the buffalo. Keeping to depressions in the rolling prairie the hunting party rode close upon the herd without being detected. Pausing a moment at the crest of a ridge, just as the hunters prepared to charge, Frémont caught a magnificent view of the herd. Then "there was a sudden halt, a confused, wavering movement, and a headlong rout" with the hunters in the midst of the frightened animals.

The excitement was general. Frémont remembered seeing the bulls in the rear turn in amazement, take a few hesitating bounds, look back again, and finally join the rest of the herd in flight. Then the hunters were among them, maneuvering their sure-footed horses to break the stampede up into small droves. He noted these things subconsciously, for he was wrapped up in his own task. His blood surged warmly. Dust rose in clouds. All about him was a sea of the shaggy, bobbing heads of rac-

ing animals. He tried desperately to steady himself for a shot, but found the movement of his running horse too great.

He was alone now in the midst of a segment of what had once been the herd. His wiry little horse kept the pace, and Frémont grimly determined to bring down a cow clinging to the pack. Buffaloes and horse crowded themselves to the limit, but the speed of the horse could not match that of the bison. He began to falter, to slow down. The buffalo drew away.

Compelled to halt, Frémont dismounted to load his gun. He looked around for his companions but saw not a sign of them. He realized for the first time that he was lost. He made quick calculations. To the west he was sure the river lay. The camp, then, would be to the south. The sun was sinking lower, so he struck out for the river, hoping to find members of the expedition or at least to get a more definite idea of the camp's location. Hours of steady plodding passed, but no river came into view. His anxiety increased.

During the early hours of the night he came upon deeply worn paths, forming what at first looked like a broad highway. But the hopes aroused thereby were quickly dashed when he discovered the paths were merely buffalo trails running to a watering-place. However, in the absence of something more tangible, he swung off and followed the runs. It was near midnight when he saw his first sign. Far to the south a rocket shot into the sky and he knew that his companions were signaling their whereabouts to him. He headed in that direction, but he did not go far before fatigue and the difficulty of travel through the dark halted him. He found a little ravine, and after carrying water in his hat to the badly spent horse he

decided to sleep. Removing the saddle for a pillow, he tied the steed by a lariat to a stirrup, so that any attempt the animal might make to wander off would awake him, and before he fell asleep he laid his gun on the ground beside him, with the barrel indicating the direction in which the rocket had ascended.

He was off again at daybreak, following the line indicated by the gun barrel, and had ridden but a short distance when he saw a searching party of three riders. The three spied him at the same time and a headlong race for him began. Louison Frenière was the first to reach him. Swinging alongside, Frenière slapped him on the shoulder, thereby winning a reward which Nicollet had offered to the first man who should touch Frémont.

This was Frémont's initiation as a prairie hunter. He was to participate in many hunts in years to come, and he was to experience the sportsman's zest in all of them; but there would never be quite the same unrestrained excitement and turbulent emotional reaction which he felt in the heat of this, his first buffalo hunt.

It required but a short time to prepare the expedition for the road after Frémont's arrival. A generous piece of roasted buffalo meat and a cup of coffee refreshed him, and although he felt the effects of the night's experience he did his part during the day's march.

The little company headed generally northeast across the table-land between the Missouri and the Red River of the North. The month was July, the work was not arduous, and Frémont enjoyed himself. The days were spent with Frenière among the buffalo. Sometimes, when far ahead of the main expedition, they would stretch at ease beside some grass-bound pond and enjoy the breezes which came laden with the fragrance of the prairie.

During these days Frémont received his early education in prairie life under the direction and tutelage of a master. Frenière knew the prairies. From him Frémont gained new ideas and new conceptions. "Uniformity," he learned, did not mean necessarily "sameness." Occasional patches of flowers, the appearance of animal life, distant moving objects—these things came to have an interest that brought new pleasure and new zest. He was amazed at Frenière's ability to determine not only whether a far-distant object was man or horse or buffalo or antelope but whether, if man, he was friend or enemy. It was in this phase of outdoor life that Frémont received training during the hours he spent with Frenière while crossing the prairie.

Having passed the summit level of the prairie plateau, the expedition came to the valley of the James River at a point where it was about seventy miles wide. Soon after descending the slope they came upon a camp of Indians. These proved to be acquaintances of Frenière who knew him as a representative of a fur-trading company. Here the party camped for the night. The Indians were cordial in the way they received the whites, and the chief offered to provide an escort through the country ahead. This friendly offer was declined. Nicollet believed he was not far from the rendezvous where he was to meet reinforcements. Then, too, he was afraid the escorting party might prove a handicap if he should meet a band of Indians that happened to be unfriendly to this tribe.

The expedition soon found the grove of oaks on the James River where they expected to find reinforcements. Four days spent in waiting convinced them that their expected companions would not arrive, and they moved on. For several days they followed up the valley of the James,

taking observations and collecting material for Nicollet's map. This took them from a point south of the mouth of the Elm River in South Dakota to the vicinity of the mouth of Bone Hill Creek in North Dakota. The route was then changed from north to northeast across the plateau which separates the James from the Cheyenne River.

Again they found themselves in the buffalo country. For three days and nights they were in the midst of herds of these animals. They had to take particular precautions with their horses during camping periods to prevent their wandering off with the bison. Finally they found it necessary to work their way to one side of the herd and wait a day or two for the buffalo to pass. And it was fortunate they did so. Tribes of Indians, having organized for a hunting party, were in the vicinity, preparing to make "a grand surround" in order to secure a large quantity of buffalo meat for the year. Had the exploring party remained in the midst of the herds they might have been killed in the frenzied stampede as the hunters closed in and commenced their work.

Learning of the presence of the Indians, the explorers opened communication and were invited to establish a camp with the tribes. Frémont thought there were about two thousand Indians established in three hundred lodges—the Yanktons, Yankonons, and Sissitons.

Having enjoyed—or endured—the hospitality of the Indians and having extended its own to these dusky denizens of the prairies, the exploring party resumed its march. The course of a tributary of the Cheyenne was mapped, and they moved northwest to Devil's Lake, which was the objective of the expedition. This region was infested with mosquitoes to such an extent that, while

eating, the men were forced to protect their faces with long veils attached to the broad brims of their hats and extending down over their plates. The horses sought a measure of protection in the smoke of the campfires.

When the party reached Devil's Lake they came upon a freshly broken camp of French Canadians from the Red River settlement of the North. These people had just completed their season's hunt, and the deep ruts cut by their wagon wheels indicated that they had secured an abundant supply of meat and hides. These hunting expeditions made clear to Nicollet and Frémont the reasons for the southward movement of the buffalo herds which had puzzled them so much a few days earlier. The Pembina settlers made two trips a year to the country around Devil's Lake to secure meat. The carts brought by them were loaded with the meat from ten buffaloes. It was dried, pounded, and mixed with melted fat. In its prepared form it was called pemmican, and it was kept in skin sacks.

Nicollet's party was encamped on the southern shore of Devil's Lake for more than a week, and there made explorations which led Frémont to conclude erroneously that its waters formed a part of the sources of the Red River of the North. On one of these exploring missions, Frémont, accompanied by Frenière, established himself for the night on the western shore of the lake. A few hours after they had wrapped themselves in their blankets they were awakened by a "confused heavy tramping and the usual grunting sounds" made by the buffalo. The animals were coming down for water. Leaping to their feet, they rushed for their horses, hurried them in, and stirred up the fire. They were none too soon, for in an instant the herd was crowding in upon them. Shouting at the tops of

their voices and firing their guns before the noses of the leaders, they managed to maintain a tiny, clear isle of safety as the buffalo swept by, those in the rear crowding the leaders out into the lake by sheer weight.

Having completed their examinations of this region, the party turned east and crossed the plateaus to the valley of the Red River, then directed their course south up that stream. Another week was spent sketching the headwaters of its tributaries. Continuing south they came again to the Cheyenne and crossed the river near the point where it turns southeast to join the Red. Several days were spent in the lake region which forms the headwaters of the Minnesota River. It was a delightful country, with an abundant supply of food and water, and with fish plentiful in the lakes. Just a short distance to the south was a low divide, beyond which were lakes connecting with waters which emptied into the Missouri.

From this beautiful spot Nicollet conducted his party once more to the post of Renville. Whether because of the long absence from a home environment or because the lowlands during these late autumn days were "radiant with asters and goldenrod," or because the generous frontier hospitality of the Renvilles stirred Frémont's appreciation—whatever the cause, the incidents of his welcome here and the luxuriant beauty of the place remained fresh in his memory.

The days of Frémont's apprenticeship were passing rapidly. A few more examinations of the headwaters of the Minnesota and the Mississippi terminated this part of the work, and at dusk on a day early in November he landed from a bark canoe at Prairie du Chien. A steamboat was "firing up" preparatory to starting for St. Louis, but Frémont and his companions decided to rest a day or

two. After it was too late they learned that the next boat would not leave until spring. It began to snow the next morning, and the river froze over. From this experience he learned two things, one of which was invaluable to him later: he learned how to skate, and he learned the value of a day.

Having lost his chance to make the journey to St. Louis by the river, Frémont was forced to travel overland by wagon. He made the trip through particularly severe winter weather, laboring through cold and snow. St. Louis held him for a short time only, then he hurried on to Washington to assist Nicollet in putting into order the material which had been collected on the expedition. Washington presented a warmer side to him this time, and, with the exception of the death of his brother, no unpleasant incident occurred to affect the serenity of his life.

III. A FUNERAL, A WEDDING, AND AN INDEPENDENT EXPLORER

Perhaps there is no more striking oddity among presidential inaugurals than the address delivered by President Harrison on the morning of March 4, 1841. The responsibility for revising it is said to have fallen to Webster. Upon returning to his lodgings after completing the task, so the story goes, the landlady, observing his expression of weariness, asked if anything had happened.

"You would think something had happened," he replied, "if you knew what I have done. I have just killed seventeen Roman pro-consuls."

But Webster did not kill them all. A few remained, and with the stilted Romanesque style they furnished a strange contrast to the general character of the topics requiring consideration on that occasion.

The tasks of the next month proved too arduous for the President. He belonged to the quieter times of an earlier generation; and the pushing, swaggering, office-seeking hoi polloi that infested Washington during those March days sapped the old man's strength. He was patient, conscientious, long-suffering; his constituents were persistent, inconsiderate, ruthless. On the morning of April 4 he died, the first presidential victim of the office-seekers of his country. A few days later the crowd that had gathered about the aged President to listen to his inaugural address again lined the streets, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, to witness his elaborate funeral procession.

On the top of Capitol Hill overlooking the street along which the funeral procession moved was a house occupied by Hassler, chief of the United States Coast Survey, a

queer, eccentric character. Nicollet and Frémont also had quarters in the building. A large room had been equipped with tables and materials for completing maps of surveys of the Northwest. It was Nicollet's work shop, and Frémont was employed there. To it on occasions came men interested in the West and in Western exploration to watch the progress of the maps. Lewis F. Linn, Linn's half-brother, Senator Dodge, George Bancroft, and Senator Thomas H. Benton were the most frequent visitors.

Frémont joined in the long conversations and discussions about the work and about the great Western wildernesses still to be surveyed. Benton was particularly interested in the unexplored regions; and his enthusiasm, in one talk with Frémont on the Oregon country, left such a lasting impression that it changed the whole course of Frémont's life. Originally having planned to make engineering his career, Frémont was swung from his intention by that evening with Senator Benton, and he became fired with an ambition to make known the unknown country of the Far West. The discovery of a subject for study which could be carried on without the use of books, "the learning at first hand from Nature herself, the drinking first at her unknown springs became a source of never ending delight" to him.

That was one of two important influences in his life which came to him in this room. The other was closely associated with it and was to reach its romantically decisive stage on April 6, 1841. Their common interest in the West had brought Frémont to Benton's home on several occasions before he at length met the Senator's daughter, Jessie. One evening, in company with the oldest sister, he attended a concert in Georgetown. There he saw Jessie Benton for the first time. "She was then just

in the bloom of her girlish beauty," he wrote more than forty years later, "and perfect health effervesced in bright talk" He was naturally attracted. "She made the effect that a rose of rare color or a beautiful picture would have done."¹

During the vacation, several months later, he saw her again at her father's house. This second meeting confirmed and strengthened the impressions of the first. He found her appealingly beautiful—possessing a beauty that "had come far enough down from English ancestry to be now in her that American kind which is made up largely of mind expressed in the face"

All of this and a great deal more. One may wonder what sort of vague sensations Frémont experienced from an "awakening mind, the qualities" of which "could only be seen in flitting shadows across the face, or in the expressions of incipient thought and unused and untried feelings." We may not attribute such sentiments to the intoxications of the recently awakened affection of a youthful lover, for Frémont was writing more than forty years after the events he recorded.

But to follow him a little farther. "There are features which convey to us a soul so white that they impress with instant pleasure, and of this kind were hers. As, too, in the daily contact there are others from which to receive pleasant words or kindly acts gives the sort of agreeable surprise we feel when suddenly we come upon patches of bright, parti-colored phlox growing on naked rock. The phlox loves the naked sand or rock, but the difference is in the warmth it finds there."

One must not expect a lover to be intelligible at all

¹ Frémont, *Memoirs of My Life*, p. 66.

times. Regardless of Frémont's statements, we are within the realms of accuracy when we conclude that he thought Jessie Benton beautiful. He considered her a young lady of unusual mental qualities. She possessed a tender, sympathetic disposition. Her courage was phenomenal. Discretion, sanity, and judgment were parts of her heritage. Patience was one of her virtues. Genial, affable, and forbearing—in short, whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were lovely or of good report were qualities that belonged to this remarkable young woman!

His sentiment had reached this stage when the funeral of President Harrison afforded Frémont an opportunity to press his suit under unique circumstances. Since Nicollet's room in the Hassler home commanded an excellent view of the route which had been selected for the funeral procession, Frémont swept it clean of maps and plans, decorated it with a gay profusion of flowers, and invited the Bentons to witness the passing of the funeral from the windows.

Frémont himself had been ordered to report with his corps for the ceremonies, but thanks to a convenient illness and a kind physician he secured leave of absence, as Jessie implies, to be near her.

A funeral procession is not the ideal background for romance, nor is the sort of raw, windy day that witnessed the last rites of a President; but in Frémont's quarters his courtship progressed smoothly, in ideal surroundings. Probably he had planned the occasion very carefully. It was to be his "red-letter day." A great fire of logs on the hearth and quantities of tea, ices, bonbons, and cakes served by an officer in blue and gold uniform created a cheerful atmosphere in striking contrast to the dismal scenes outside.

"The long starving, the cruel freezing, the unceasing danger from savage Indians," Jessie wrote in her memoirs over fifty years later, "were mercifully hidden in the future. To two of us sufficient was that day of days together."

April 6, 1841, recorded the funeral of the first President of the United States to die in office and fixed the future relationship of Jessie Benton and John C. Frémont. And thus the second of those epoch-making events was determined. Senator Benton and his wife objected to the marriage. As Jessie was just fifteen, their aversion to it was natural. But their arguments were as futile as they were natural. They could delay the event; they could not prevent it.

In her anxiety it is probable that Mrs. Benton appealed to Poinsett. At any rate, Poinsett sent his young friend away from Washington for a few months. The separation did not dampen the ardor of the lovers, however. A probationary period of a year had been agreed upon, but, Frémont says, "as sometimes happens, the most important things of our individual lives come upon us suddenly and unpremeditatedly; and so it was with our marriage . . ." In other words, the couple took matters into their own hands, disregarded parental edicts, and ran away and were married on October 19, 1841. A storm of protest, registered with characteristic Benton vigor, followed discovery of the flight and marriage. The anger soon melted, however, and Frémont and his young bride were accepted in the family circle.

Meanwhile events were preparing the opening for Frémont's independent career. The officials at Washington had intended to send Nicollet on an exploring expedition west of the Missouri. The purpose was to open a way for

emigration to Oregon through the mountains. He was to be assisted by Frémont. In his *Memoirs* the latter says the expedition "was to indicate and describe the line of travel, and the best positions for military posts; and to describe, and fix in position, the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains, at which this initial expedition was to terminate." In addition to this it had a political character. It was to have a "bearing on the holding of our territory on the Pacific." Whether the latter was a real part of the program or a fiction conceived in Frémont's imagination is a question.

The plans were not carried out as originally intended. At least the expedition was not headed by Nicollet. His health had been poor for some time and the exposures of the last expedition had aggravated old weaknesses. As the year 1841 passed it became evident that he would not be able to assume the leadership of the proposed explorations. On New Year's Day, 1842, Frémont was informed, following a dinner at Senator Benton's, that he would be required to take command of the exploring party. He was disappointed at the declining health of his chief, but he was thrilled with the opportunity afforded him through Nicollet's misfortune.

While he was in the midst of preparations there came to Frémont's home one evening a German topographer who had been thrown out of work because the government had failed to make necessary appropriations for the department in which he had been employed. He was a "strange figure—a shock of light curly hair standing up thick about his head, and a face so red that we attributed it to a wrong cause instead of to the cold and nervousness and anxiety which turned his speech into stammering." The man proved to be in rather desperate circumstances finan-

cially. Through Frémont's assistance his family was provided with a Christmas dinner, an act that brought embarrassment to the recipient at the time and enormous reward in loyal service to the giver through the years to come. This was Charles Preuss.

From January to May, 1842, Frémont was engaged in perfecting plans for his explorations, and on May 2 he left for St. Louis. Mrs. Frémont remained in Washington with her family. Several weeks he spent in St. Louis selecting men for the undertaking. Among the members of the small party were a few who remained with Frémont through some of his most trying experiences in the West: Basil Lajeunesse who later sacrificed his life in the work; Lucien Maxwell who rendered invaluable service as a hunter for this and later expeditions; Clement Lambert who held the expedition together during that very year while Frémont was absent.

On board the boat, en route from St. Louis to "Kansas Landing"—a place in the vicinity of the Kansas City of today—Frémont met for the first time Christopher, or "Kit," Carson, one of the many colorful figures who roamed the country beyond the frontier and whose name still conjures up some of the most remarkable tales of adventure and peril that the early West affords.

Frémont was favorably impressed with Carson. He staked his judgment on his scanty acquaintance with the frontiersman and engaged him as official guide for his expedition, although he had previously planned to engage a Captain Drips for that important post. Carson was one of a family of about twenty children. Born in Kentucky, he had come to Missouri at an early age, and was soon apprenticed to a saddler in the little prairie town of Westport. His employer supplied emigrants and traders with

harness and saddles for their long overland expeditions. Here young Carson—he was sixteen years of age—heard the various stories of adventure reported by the men returning from trapping expeditions and by those members of the caravans who traveled to and from Santa Fe. We are told that these tales fired his imagination, that they appealed to his love of adventure, that his restless nature could not resist the call of such opportunity for satiating the wanderlust of his youthful spirit. Soon there appeared an advertisement, issued by his employer, informing all who read it that young Carson had disappeared and offering two cents for information that would lead to his return.

Carson had run away. He feared the dangers of the plain less than he dreaded the long hours spent in the shop, and he joined one of the overland caravans to Santa Fe. When Frémont met him in 1842 Carson had just been to St. Louis to place his young daughter (by an Indian wife) in a Catholic school and was returning to the frontier. This was the first time he had returned to the settlement since he had run away twenty years before.

Carson became an exceptionally valuable member of Frémont's expeditions, and a warm friendship developed between the two men. From the Landing Frémont went up the Kansas River about ten miles to a trading-post controlled by a member of the Chouteau family. Here he completed preparations, but not until another three weeks had passed. During that interval the members of the party were schooled in the habits which they were to adopt on the plains and in the mountains.

On the tenth of June, 1842, Frémont announced every preparation complete and gave the order to break camp. Like "a ship leaving the shore for a long voyage" the

little party headed west across the plains. It happened to be a Friday, a circumstance which the men recalled somewhat ruefully later amidst the hardships and tribulations of the journey.

The route lay along the Kansas River. Crossing it near the present site of Topeka, they passed over the Big Vermillion River to the Big Blue and the vicinity of Grand Island. The distance traveled from the mouth of the Kansas to this point was estimated to be three hundred and twenty-eight miles. A little farther along the Platte a suggestion of the experience they might expect came upon them. They met a bedraggled and despondent party of trappers, employees of the American Fur Company, who had spent weeks trying vainly to bring their season's catch of furs by water to St. Louis.

Although they had started down with the flood and in small craft that drew only nine inches of water, they had soon come to grief among the wide, shallow stretches common to the Platte, where they spent long days attempting to drag their boats through the heavy sands of the river bed. Occasionally open water lured them into branches and channels running from the main stream, and they would learn of their mistake only after they had digressed eight or ten miles. They would then have to retrace their steps, pulling the boats against strong currents for days to regain their starting-point. Disheartened, they finally made a cache of their furs, except what each man could carry on his back, abandoned their boats, and started overland for St. Louis.

"We laughed then," said Frémont, "at their forlorn and vagabond appearance, and in our turn, a month or two afterwards, furnished the same occasion for merriment to others."

The expedition then ascended the Platte and by July first reached the vicinity of the mouth of the South Fork. They had come upon the grazing lands of the buffalo, and for a short time at least their larder was filled with the choicest portions of buffalo meat. It was a welcome change from the regular diet of salt pork to which they had been confined, and the men enjoyed it to the full.

Frémont crossed to the north bank of the South Fork and followed up that stream about forty miles. He decided to divide his party at this point. The main division of the company was sent across to the North Fork under the command of Clement Lambert, and Frémont with half a dozen companions continued up the South Fork. The North Fork was the branch he was anxious to examine, but he wanted to locate the mouths of some tributaries of the southern branch as far as St. Vrain's Fort. At the latter place he expected to obtain mules to relieve his horses. To reach the fort required a journey of about two hundred miles.

In the early morning of July 5, Frémont separated from the main party, and he arrived at St. Vrain's Fort on the evening of July 10. En route he had been entertained by a village of Arapahoe Indians. At another place he found a small settlement of New Englanders who had been companions of Wyeth when that explorer had come to the Columbia. They had returned to this point on the South Platte, taken unto themselves a squaw apiece, and started families. Frémont was surprised at the number of "little, fat, buffalo-fed boys" he found "tumbling about the camp." The fertile valley with its abundance of grass and the excellent condition of the fine horses and mules about the camp gave evidence of frontier comfort.

Still farther up the stream and within a day's journey

of St. Vrain's Fort he was entertained over night at a Spanish settlement which had been established on an island in the South Platte by Chabonard. Chabonard was in the employ of Bent of St. Vrain's Fort. The settlement was apparently a temporary one. Chabonard had started down the river during the preceding spring with a boat-load of furs on his way to St. Louis, but he had met the fate of the party already mentioned, and for the same reason, the shallow water. Unable to proceed farther he had established his camp. A Spanish woman, the wife of Jim Beckwourth (whom Frémont had met a day or two earlier) was in the settlement.

St. Vrain's and its vicinity was home to Lucien Maxwell, whom Frémont had brought with him. He had spent the last few years between this point and Taos. The two places were sufficiently near for the Spaniards to come to St. Vrain's for employment, and several came for this purpose while Frémont was there.

Frémont did not procure everything desired on this trip but he did secure a few horses and mules, employed a Spaniard, and made the observations he had planned. With the exception of a few pounds of coffee he was unable to secure the supply of provisions he had expected.

The return was to be over the road by which they had come for part of the distance, then a direct route to Fort Laramie. At the outset the Spaniard proved a valuable acquisition, largely because one of the new mules proved troublesome. The mule objected to being saddled. There was a lengthy battle between men and animal, but the saddle was finally fastened in place. Then José mounted the mule, and, in an exhibition of horsemanship for which Mexican riders are famous, completely subdued it.

The country through which the party passed was new

to all of them, and Frémont was in doubt most of the time as to the names of the streams. He described the country, commented on the character of the soil, collected specimens of plants, and admitted his frequent perplexities. The expedition reached Fort Laramie in the evening of July 15. They found members of the main party encamped on the North Platte just above the fort.

While Frémont had been trying to attach names to streams and become familiar with a new country, the main party had undergone a more exciting experience. Preuss, who had started out with Frémont, had turned back at the end of the first day to join the main company, and his journal records the experiences of the trip to Fort Laramie. While they were in camp on the evening of July 8, one of the outstanding figures of those pioneer days, Jim Bridger, joined them with a large company of trappers. He was returning from the country to which Frémont's party was going, and his report created excitement in the camp.

Bridger reported the country in a dangerous condition. The Sioux Indians were on the warpath. His party had been attacked by them and several members of it killed. The Cheyenne and Gros Ventre Indians had joined the Sioux, and the hostile tribes were at that time overrunning the upper country. They were then in the vicinity of the Red Buttes, which were directly on the route Frémont proposed to take, and they had asserted their intention of making war on any force found west of that point. Apparently the main object of their hostility was a large encampment of white people and Snake Indians who had established a rendezvous in the valley of the Sweetwater.

Because Bridger had hunted and trapped over the country and knew it as well as the Indians, he had been able

to escape without further loss of life to his party. His report of this ominous condition caused a stir of uneasiness. In all parts of the camp Preuss heard the exclamation: "*Il n'y aura pas de vie pour nous!*" Many of the party wanted to return to St. Louis at once, but Lambert, leader in Frémont's absence, kept a grip on the men. With a few loyal supporters, he insisted on carrying out Frémont's orders. The confidence and determination of the few quieted the rest, and the excitement had subsided and the situation was well in hand when Frémont arrived.

Fort Laramie was situated on the banks of the river of that name, a stream whose clear waters from the mountains afforded a pleasing contrast to the thick, muddy waters of the Platte. The fort was in the shape of a quadrangle and was surrounded by walls fifteen feet in height inclosing a small yard. The doors and windows of the various apartments opened toward the inside, as was common in forts of this kind. A square tower with loopholes was placed over the main entrance, and situated diagonally opposite each other at two of the corners were large, square bastions so arranged as to sweep all four walls. The fort was the property of the American Fur Company, and was occupied by less than twenty men. It had been established to facilitate and protect trade with the Indians, who usually came two or three times a year to exchange buffalo robes and furs for guns, powder, blankets, calico, and cheap trinkets of many kinds.

Frémont visited the fort soon after joining his men, and there learned more in detail of the conditions of the country beyond. There seemed to be no doubt of the hostility of the Indians, and even when one makes allowance for frontier exaggeration the dangers were serious. The fact that Carson made his will adds something to the

evidence supporting this conclusion. An Oregon party ahead of Frémont's expedition was allowed to pass safely through the hostile tribes, over the protest of the younger tribesmen. These young braves who had voted against permitting the Oregon expedition to pass were all the more determined to take vengeance on any other company of whites found in the country. Indeed, some of the young warriors had defied the older members of the tribes, and a few days after the Oregon party had passed through they started out to overtake them with a view to making an attack. News of the success or failure of this expedition was expected when Frémont visited the fort.

People in the midst of such rumors are not likely to make allowance for false accounts or exaggerated reports that get into circulation. But one of the traders at the fort—Bissonette—believed that if Frémont would take an interpreter and a few old men from the Indian village in the vicinity he would have no difficulty. There would still be some danger of being attacked before the hostile tribes should learn who they were, but this was not great.

While he remained here taking observations and making preparations for continuing his explorations Frémont saw a great deal of the local tribes and received occasional invitations to entertainments in his honor. One of these he attended was a "dog feast." The meat, which was glutinous in character and "had something of the appearance and flavor of mutton," was served in a bowl. While eating it he felt something moving behind him, and looking around found that he had taken his seat in the midst of "a litter of fat young puppies." Fortunately, he says, he was not "of delicate nerves and continued quietly to empty [his] platter."

About July 20 Frémont completed his arrangements.

His party consisted of trained men familiar with the hardships and dangers peculiar to such an expedition. His brother-in-law, Randolph Benton, and a companion—lads about twelve years old—were left at the fort. One man who preferred to take no chances in the mountains was released, and the party was ready to depart on July 21.

At the last minute, some of the Indian chiefs tried a bit of typical Indian strategy to detain the expedition. They informed Frémont that the young braves who had followed the other whites would undoubtedly fire upon him. Frémont doubted their sincerity. To test them, he requested that they select two or three of their number and send them with his party until they should meet the younger braves. He would gladly pay for the service, he explained, and they could easily prevent the attack which they predicted. The Indian chiefs declined, and Frémont then addressed them:

“You say you love the whites: why have you killed so many already this spring? You say you love the whites, and are full of many expressions of friendship for us; but you are not willing to undergo the fatigue of a few days’ ride to save our lives. We do not believe what you have said, and will not listen to you. Whatever a chief among us tells his soldiers to do is done. We are the soldiers of the great chief, your father. He has told us to come here and see this country, and all the Indians, his children. Why should we not go? Before we came we heard that you had killed, and ceased to be his children; but we came among you peaceably, holding out our hands. Now we find the stories we heard are not lies, and that you are no longer his friends and children. We have thrown away our bodies and will not turn back. When you told us that your young men would kill us, you did not

know that our hearts were strong, and you did not see the rifles which my young men carry in their hands. We are few, and you are many, and may kill us all; but there will be much crying in your villages, for many of your young men will stay behind and forget to return with your warriors from the mountains. Do you think that our great chief will let his soldiers die and forget to cover their graves? Before the snows melt again, his warriors will sweep away your villages as the fire does the prairie in the autumn. See! I have pulled down my *white houses* [tents], and my people are ready; when the sun is ten paces higher we shall be on the march. If you have anything to tell us you will say it soon."

The speech was effective. One of the chiefs assured Frémont that a young man would accompany him, and such a one joined the camp the next day. On the twenty-second of July the company bade farewell to the people at the fort and headed up the North Platte for the mountains. There had been an unusual drought, and the effect on the country was depressing. The ground was covered with grasshoppers and these had destroyed all vegetation. The horses had to be fed with the boughs of young cottonwoods or poplars found along the river bed.

On the second day sentinels brought two sulky young Sioux into camp. They had been members of a larger party and had been following the company of Oregon emigrants. Some of the Indians had wanted to kill all members of the Oregon party, others had objected, and finally, separated into small groups, the war party was returning. These two had belonged to the faction demanding drastic action. Some of Frémont's men wanted to shoot the Indians, but the leader insisted upon releasing them.

On July 24 or 25 the expedition came once more into a buffalo country and here took time to lay in a supply of food. Low scaffolds on which were placed thin strips of buffalo meat and under which small fires were kindled soon supplied their depleted larder with enough "jerked" meat to last for fifteen days. This was packed away in carts and Frémont determined not to use it until compelled to do so. With grass more abundant, the animals made up for the previous days of privation. The camp for July 26, at the mouth of Deer Creek, the largest tributary of the Platte between the mouth of the Sweetwater and the Laramie, was one of the oases of this section.

Again on the twenty-eighth discouraging reports of hostile Indians, roving the country toward which Frémont was headed, reached the expedition. The situation, judged by these reports, looked so bad that even Bissonette, optimistic and encouraging before, advised Frémont to turn back. Frémont refused. Bissonette then asked for and obtained his release on the ground that he had not expected to go any farther than that point, anyway. He left the party and set out for home.

Realizing the need of traveling as light as possible Frémont decided to make a cache of everything not absolutely necessary. The place was named Cache Camp, and was, according to Frémont's observations, in longitude $106^{\circ} 38' 26''$ and latitude $42^{\circ} 50' 53''$.

Their fears, however, proved groundless. The expedition continued along the general course of the North Platte until July 31. On that day it crossed over to the Sweetwater. A few herds of buffalo in this vicinity gave an opportunity to procure an additional supply of meat, and the party remained in camp a mile below Independence

Rock until noon of August 1, drying it. Breaking camp in the afternoon of August 1, the expedition continued west along the Sweetwater to the South Pass, arriving there August 8. They had traveled three hundred and twenty miles from Fort Laramie and nine hundred and fifty miles from the mouth of the Kansas. The ascent had been so gradual that members of the party did not realize they had reached the divide and that waters to the west of them flowed to the Pacific. The Little Sandy, which was the next stream reached, was a tributary to the Big Sandy, which in turn emptied into the Green River. Noon on August 10 was spent on the Big Sandy.

The country impressed Frémont very favorably. His narrative takes on a new interest as he dwells on the "truly magnificent" views. Each hour of the day had its charm. The expedition was slowly making its way to the loftiest part of the Wind River Mountains. They came upon a beautiful lake, from the southern end of which they had a superb view—"a grand bed of snow-capped mountains rose before us, pile after pile, glowing in the bright light of an August day."

So pleased was Frémont with the spot that he determined to establish his main camp in the vicinity and, with a few chosen men, conduct exploring expeditions from this center. He had looked forward to examining these mountains as the thing of chief interest on the expedition, and with this choice setting for the establishment of his camp he had every reason to feel elated over the prospects. While crossing a stream to reach his destination he broke his only barometer, an incident he recorded as the most disappointing experience he had had. As it was useless to think of procuring another, the only thing left was to try to repair it, and Frémont set about the task as soon as

the camp was set up. Much to his delight he succeeded in the delicate task.

With fourteen carefully chosen companions and fifteen of the best mules, one of them bearing the provisions, Frémont again set out. The supply of food was running low and they had been out of the buffalo country for some time, when one of his men was fortunate enough to kill an antelope.

At the end of two hours the party had ascended the first range of mountains, from the ridge of which they looked out across a wonderful panorama of lakes, balsam pines, and aspen to distant snow-capped ranges. "It seemed as if, from the vast expanse of uninteresting prairie we had passed over, Nature had collected all her beauties together in one chosen place." "The air was fragrant with the odor of the pines; and I realized this delightful morning the pleasure of breathing that mountain air which makes a constant theme of the hunter's praise, and which now made us feel as if we had all been drinking some exhilarating gas."

After they had descended the ridge and made their way through the pine forests and along the borders of the lakes they learned that the place with its rich undergrowth and varicolored flowers formed a paradise for botanists. And so the day continued and reached its climax in the site selected for their evening camp. This was in a level bottom about eighty yards wide, covered with thick grass and divided into two parts by a gently flowing stream. It was an ideal pasture for the mules and an impressive place for a halt.

"Among all the strange places on which we had occasion to encamp during our long journey," Frémont wrote, "none have left so vivid an impression on my mind as the

camp of this evening. The disorder of the masses which surrounded us; the little hole through which we saw the stars overhead; the dark pines where we slept; and the rocks lit up with the glow of our fires—made a night picture of very wild beauty.”

The next morning the party followed the little stream up the valley to its source in a small mountain lake. The mules were left here with some of the men while Frémont with the others proceeded on foot. They expected to climb the high peak—later known as Frémont’s Peak—which rose ahead of them. It appeared so near that they intended to make the ascent and return to camp that evening, but the distance proved deceptive. Dark came upon them far from their companions and farther still from the coveted peak. Many of them were sick from fatigue, the thin air at high altitude, and the lack of food.

Evidently Basil Lajeunesse was the only one to retain his normal strength and energy. His powers of endurance, Frémont thought, resembled those of a mountain goat more than the strength of a man. Not until Basil returned to camp and brought up fresh men (the others returned to camp exhausted) and a few mules, was the leader ready to make a final effort. This he did on August 15.

The mules were used to carry the men as far as possible and then were left to feed while the ascent was completed. Appropriately enough Frémont was the first to reach the crest and in his impetuous haste barely escaped disaster. “I sprang upon the summit, and another step would have precipitated me into an immense snowfield five hundred feet below.” The crest was about three feet in width. Each man in turn—there were six in the party—ascended the crest of the mountain, and the national flag was un-

furled "to wave in the breeze where never flag waved before."

As they sat on a rock never dreaming that animated life in any form existed within their vicinity, a bee from the eastern valleys settled gently on the knee of one of the men. Frémont thought of him as the pioneer of his kind and the forerunner of a westward-moving civilization. But such considerations must have come with reflection later. The immediate reaction was fatal to the bee. He was placed with pressed flowers collected in the region and probably brought back to the East from whence he had come. He had ascended, according to Frémont's estimate, an elevation of 13,570 feet, "certainly the highest known flight of that insect." And, incidentally, Frémont believed his little party had broken a record also. "We had climbed the loftiest peak of the Rocky Mountains, . . . and, standing where never human foot had stood before, felt the exultation of first explorers."

Leaving the peak at two o'clock, the little company scrambled down the side of the mountain, secured their animals, and traveled until nightfall. Rising early on August 16, they continued the descent and reached their camp on the mountain lake just about dark. The rich grass revived the animals, and a good night's rest restored the spirit of the men. The principal object of the expedition had been achieved, and the camp was cheered by orders to prepare for the homeward trip.

The party broke its main camp on the Little Sandy River, where headquarters for this particular expedition had been established, on the morning of August 19. A few hours brought them again to the divide and then to the Sweetwater River. Before the day was over they found themselves once more in the buffalo country, and

roasted ribs in ample quantities restored good humor and song to the fireside groups.

On August 23 they came to Independence Rock, where Frémont committed an act which was to prove annoying to him years later. He carved a cross and covered it with a "black preparation of India rubber" to preserve it against the elements. His opponents in the presidential campaign of 1856 recalled the incident and attributed the act to his membership in the Catholic Church.

One more task remained—a survey of the upper Platte River. About daybreak on the morning of August 24 Frémont selected a few of his best men, took them in a rubber boat inflated with air, and began the descent of that treacherous stream. Broad, tranquil stretches were succeeded by narrow canyons strewn with huge boulders and sharp-pointed rocks and interspersed with numerous cataracts. To follow the stream through the canyons was dangerous. The alternative was to carry the boat over the ridges and through the wild, precipitous region along the banks of the river. They determined to risk the dangers of the passage by water rather than endure the toil and hardships of the overland cut-offs.

The first three cataracts were passed so successfully that the men were emboldened to try even more treacherous canyons. Their confidence in the little rubber boat was unbounded. At eight o'clock they landed for breakfast and to reconnoiter. At nine they re-embarked, soon to find themselves on the edge of a more treacherous passage.

"Portage was out of the question. So far as we could see, the jagged rocks pointed out the course of the canyon, on a winding line of seven or eight miles. It was simply a narrow, dark chasm in the rock; and here the perpen-

dicular faces were much higher than in the previous pass, being at this end two or three hundred, and farther down, as we afterwards ascertained, five hundred feet in vertical height."

They determined to make the attempt, but it was a foolhardy decision. Another cataract was passed successfully, only to reveal a more dangerous one just ahead. Men with ropes attached to the boat clambered over the boulders beside the stream, attempting to guide it through the passage, but the swift current carried the little rubber conveyance along so rapidly that two of the men were compelled to release their ropes and the third was pulled into the water and nearly drowned. The boat was overturned, and valuable notes and instruments were lost.

The attempt to descend the river farther was abandoned, and the weary, foot-sore explorers passed through the "Hot Spring gate," the "Thermopylae of the West," to Goat Island, where the entire party had arranged previously to meet.

On August 26 they reached Cache Camp and found everything undisturbed. The carts were uncovered and put together and the goods loaded into them. On the last day of August they reached Fort Laramie. Three days later they left for the settlements. Their camp on September 30 was made at the junction of the Platte with the Missouri, a distance of 520 miles from Fort Laramie, and 315 miles from the junction of the North and South Platte. The boat which Frémont had ordered before leaving the settlement was ready, and on October 1 the little party boarded it for the final lap of the journey. They arrived at St. Louis on the seventeenth, and on the twenty-ninth Frémont reached Washington.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE WEST

The success of Frémont's first expedition added fuel to a burning ambition and quickened an interest, already keen, for exploring more thoroughly the world beyond the Mississippi. And never was the time more appropriate for awakening such an interest. The West was beginning to be front-page material, and its influence in public affairs was becoming paramount. Prominent and friendly association with such a theme was a road to fame, and Frémont proved adept at exacting a maximum amount of renown from the contact. It is therefore fitting, in order to make a satisfactory appraisal of his life, that a brief survey of the West during the decade of Frémont's principal explorations should be presented.

Soon after the War of 1812 the frontier crept up the Missouri River to the big bend, and for more than two decades this remained the extreme western limit of settlement. Meanwhile the unoccupied area farther north and south gradually filled with settlers. A glance at the maps in the *Census Reports* showing the population for 1840 will reveal the settled area in Arkansas and Missouri established rather evenly along the ninety-fourth meridian west from Greenwich, or the line which passes through the Kansas City of today. Throughout the 'forties the movement was constantly toward this line. The interstate migrations for the period are not given in the *Census Reports*, and the exact number participating cannot be determined. While McMaster's figures are undoubtedly too large, they are at least suggestive. Three hundred and sixty thousand natives of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, he says, moved into Ohio during

the decade. From Ohio 230,000 natives migrated into states farther west. From Indiana there was a similar movement into Illinois, and from the latter state thousands of settlers pushed north into Wisconsin or across the Mississippi into Missouri and Iowa. Emigration from Europe during the ten years ending in 1850 added to the impressiveness of this westward movement. In 1842, emigrants numbering 101,000 crossed the Atlantic for America. By 1848 the number had reached 296,000. Between these dates hundreds of thousands more came into the United States. Many of the immigrants settled in the West.

The territorial expansion during this decade is no less interesting than the westward movement of population. Between 1789 and 1920, 2,851,394 square miles of territory were added to the original thirteen states. Nearly half of that—or 1,204,896 square miles—was added during the 'forties. Indeed, this addition came during the three years from 1845 to 1848. With the exception of about 30,000 square miles of territory—29,670, to be exact—added by the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, the United States assumed its present continental boundaries as a result of these annexations. This gave an area for expansion beyond the fondest dreams of the men of Jefferson's day. Settlers with sentiments akin to those of Daniel Boone could find ample room, but the frontier line, with the exception of the movement into Texas and that across the continent to the Pacific Coast, remained east of the ninety-fourth meridian. The fertile plains of Kansas and Nebraska remained unoccupied. At least two factors contributed to checking the westward movement at the point indicated. These were reservations made for Indians in that section, and the myth perpetrated by Major

Stephen H. Long in 1819-1821 and perpetuated by the geographies of a later period.¹

A frontier halted in the face of opportunity for expansion such as the country had never before experienced produced a unique condition. It is not its uniqueness, however, to which attention should be directed, but rather to the new, fresh, union spirit that developed behind the frontier and to the West as the dominant issue in national affairs during the decade ending in 1850.

When Major Long created the desert myth, and geographies later fostered the illusion, he did an excellent thing for the development of union sentiment in the United States. Had the population spread itself too thinly over those far-flung plains, centrifugal forces might have offset such centripetal influences as the times brought forth, and we should have had secession movements more determined in character than those associated with the early history of Tennessee and the Old Southwest. The people needed a temporary check placed on the movement westward. To be sure, such restraint bred restlessness, but on the crest of this spirit incidents and experiences came which were to contribute to building a union sympathy strong enough to hold the loyalty of the population when a part of it crossed the plains in the mad rush which came during the closing years of the decade. At no other period in our history had the West loomed so large and at no

¹ The report made by Major Long, following his explorations in the country west of the ninety-fifth meridian in 1819-1820, fastened the term "desert area" on that section and helped to postpone its settlement for more than a generation. See Edwin James (ed.), *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains, performed in the Year 1819 and '20 . . .* (2 vols. 1823); also in R. G. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, Vols. XIV-XVII.

time had the interest in it attracted so much national attention.

The period which we are considering opened with a great eastern sweep of frontier influences which the presidential election of 1840 carried to every section of the country, from the smallest hamlet to the most densely populated metropolitan center. The campaign has been described by Professor Channing as one of "hurrah and unreason" such as "has never been paralleled in the United States." It was the first presidential election in which modern tactics were used to influence the voter, and probably no paraphernalia ever suggested in a political campaign in this country has received as whole-hearted support as the log-cabin, hard-cider, and raccoon-skin combination adopted by the Whigs in 1840. In such an environment things Western were popular and Western leaders enjoyed special advantages. If a public man could not establish direct communication with some phase of Western life, the next best thing for him was to show that members of his family were in some way intimately associated with a frontier environment. Speaking before a great mass meeting in Saratoga, New York, in August, 1840, Daniel Webster said:

Gentlemen, it did not happen to me to be born in a log-cabin, but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log-cabin, raised amidst the snowdrifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early that, when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney, and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections and the touching narratives and incidents, which mingle

with all I know of this primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those inhabiting it are now among the living; and if ever I am ashamed of it, or if I ever fail in affectionate veneration for him who reared it, and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and, through the fire and blood of seven years' Revolutionary War, shrunk from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name and the name of my posterity be blotted forever from the memory of mankind.

Saratoga was a well-known resort even in 1840. During the summer thousands of people came to this small town, about thirty miles north of Albany, to spend time in "fashionable idleness." At Congress Hall might be found those who claimed social recognition through long lines of ancestors. At the United States Hotel the newly rich established themselves. Professional men selected Union Hall. Others who could not claim prestige through heritage, wealth, or talent were also found there, but it was not a frontier group to whom Webster delivered himself on this occasion.

Name the important issues of the decade, from presidential elections to the pre-emption act, from tariff proposals to rights of petition, or from the Linn bill to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and it will be found that nearly every one of them is associated in some way, directly or indirectly, with the West.

This suggests the idea of "manifest destiny." Certainly expansion into the West and interest in that section were not mere incidents. They were forces. They were the most definite things in this hectic decade. They were ruthless in their persistence. From the local meetings in Missouri preceding the emigration of the first home-seekers to California in 1841 on through the Webster-Ashburton

Treaty and the indignation assemblies following the failure of that treaty to include a settlement of the Oregon Question, one may trace a series of events which helped to give definiteness to the Democratic platform of 1844. And in this case it should be observed that a party platform and a so-called "dark horse" candidate were successful over the Whig nominee who was the most popular man of the time.

The West contributed the most important influence of the period. Petitions, provisos, abolition, slavery—these owed their prominence to their connection with the West. Abolition thrived on slavery and slavery in turn became more dominating under the attacks of abolition, and both found renewed strength for combat in their interest in the West. But subtract the sentiment of abolition or slavery from its native habitat and transplant it to a remote Western environment and a great deal of the native aggressiveness would disappear. Gwin and Frémont might have lived in neighborly relations in California; in the strong sectional air of Washington the slavery sentiment of the South was sure to find congenial lodgment in the life and thought of Gwin, and Frémont was equally sure to be susceptible to abolition influence.

The development of Union sentiment and the growing influence of the West were interdependent. They gave mutual support and they created mutual confidence. They grew together. To weaken one would have been to hamper the other. The attached Western customs won the respect of the East and contributed to its progress. Eastern tendencies found limited acceptance in the attached West and gave stability to its institutions. The blending created a stronger sentiment of union. That strengthened sentiment crossed the plains and mountains at the close of

the decade and settled on the Pacific Coast. And back from this Far West came renewed strength for the Union.

The important thing in the decade, then, was the West. Even while people stirred restlessly behind the frontier during the early days of this period, they were preparing to establish the western boundary on the Pacific. Within a short period of three years, as we have seen, Texas was acquired, claims to Oregon were adjusted, and the Mexican cession was obtained.

The West monopolized the interest of the people during this period. The Atlantic section had formerly divided the people's attention between it and Europe. In this decade the Eastern coast faced about. In an address delivered in Boston in 1844 Emerson said :

The vast majority of the people of this country live by the land, and carry its qualities in their manners and opinions. We, in the Atlantic states, by position, have been commercial, and have imbibed easily a European culture. Luckily for us, the nervous, rocky West is intruding a new and continental element into the national mind, and we shall yet have an American.

"We shall yet have an American"? Was Emerson aware for the first time of a process that had been going on for two centuries? Hardly. Was he disappointed with the product so far? Probably. Was he voicing a strong faith in the character of the citizen that would ultimately evolve from the Americanization work of his own day? Undoubtedly.

Three years later he wrote in his journal: "Eager, solicitous, hungry, rabid, busy-bodied America, attempting many things, vain, ambitious to feel thy own existence, and convince others of thy talent, by attempting and hastily accomplishing much; yes, catch thy breath and

correct thyself, and failing here, prosper out there; speed and fever are never greatness; but reliance and severity and waiting." And in another line he added: "America is formless, has no terrible and no beautiful condensation."

And he might have added that its formlessness, its color, its simplicity, many of its interests, much of its strength, more of its confusion, and most of its boundless optimism were in the West.

Frémont's official expeditions were made during the early part of the period under consideration, and the fame he gathered from them has continued into our own day. This popularity cannot be attributed to new discoveries or to new routes opened by him. It was not based on exceptional skill in organizing expeditions of the type he led, although it must be admitted they were well organized. Nor did his renown rest on a romantic marriage or on the influence of his father-in-law, as has been asserted. It is my opinion that, given the expeditions, Frémont's fame would have been practically the same if he had never met Jessie Benton or her influential father. Rather, it was the timeliness of his explorations that brought prominence to the leader. The fur-trading period was closing (Astor retired in 1844), and along the attached frontier local gatherings were discussing the Far West as a home. Indeed, home-seekers had already begun to cross the plains. There was an eager demand for information about the Western world, and official information was particularly desirable.

The reception of Frémont's official reports bears out this contention. It is not possible to determine the exact number of copies printed, but there can be no doubt of their popularity. They were among the widely read works of the day and among the most popular government documents ever published. Twenty thousand copies of the

report of the first and second expeditions alone were ordered printed by Congress. They were reprinted by a dozen commercial publishers in this country and by some abroad. When the American Consul at Valparaiso, F. D. Atherton, read the second report he wrote Larkin at Monterey: "It is a stirring narrative, written by a man of superior talents and sound sense. Depend upon it, Lieutenant Frémont is a man of whom we shall hear more before many years." Atherton's judgment of men may be debated, but his prophecy certainly was fulfilled. For Frémont received fame from his explorations which was out of proportion to the services he rendered.

V. THE GREAT EXPEDITION

Among Frémont's explorations the second expedition was the most important for it extended over a larger area than the others. In Carson and Thomas Fitzpatrick he had the two best guides in the country. His equipment was excellent. His reports show that his observations were more accurate and covered a wider range of subjects than on any of the others. His interest in his work was never keener, and he was at his zenith of physical fitness.

The emigration across the plains had by this time assumed sufficient headway to attract the general interest of the country and give additional incentive to the work. Something of national dignity was attached to the undertaking in the eyes of these emigrants. Frémont represented the government at Washington in a very personal way, and something of a protective character was felt from his presence. This had its reaction on him. He began to have a paternal interest in the settlers. His remote position served to foster a certain independence of spirit and action. Hardships were met more successfully.

When students refer to his reports they have in mind particularly the report of his second expedition. The first expedition was short and rather insignificant. Its chief importance lay in the experience which was to be of help later. The third terminated in California when Frémont became involved in military operations. The fourth ended disastrously in the snow-covered passes of southern Colorado. The fifth followed a year of luxurious living in Paris and ended fatally in those same mountains. The second alone stands out as exploration carried on successfully—or nearly so—to the end.

This second expedition, however, narrowly escaped trouble at the very outset and was saved from its difficulties by the prompt decision of Frémont's wife. Before leaving St. Louis, Lieutenant Frémont (he had been appointed second lieutenant of topographical engineers by President Van Buren) had added to his equipment a howitzer, which he carried for extra protection against the "audacious" Indian tribes. News of this acquisition filtered through to Washington, and Colonel Abert, in charge of the topographical division, sent an imperative order to Frémont, summoning him to Washington immediately to explain why he carried a field gun on an expedition of scientific rather than military purpose. The letter was delivered to Mrs. Frémont, who opened it, read it, and made a quick decision. Instead of forwarding it to her husband, she wrote telling him to "set out upon the journey forthwith and make at Bent's Fort the waiting for the grass to get its full strength."

So, on May 29, 1843, Frémont and his party were hurried out upon the plains by his wife's letter. Not until he returned home did he learn why she had urged him to start at once, and when he heard her story, he agreed with her that the order had emanated from quarters hostile to him and had been a deliberate attempt to prevent the expedition.

At any rate, Frémont took his wife's suggestion at its face value and put many miles between his party and the camp at the mouth of the Kansas River, where Mrs. Frémont's letter had reached him. This letter has become historical, for it probably saved Frémont's greatest expedition from early disaster and, in the years that followed, the whole Frémont family referred to the incident with gusto.

At Elm Grove¹ the expedition camped for two days and perfected plans for the trip. Here the men mingled with a number of emigrants who were about to depart for the Pacific Coast under the leadership of J. B. Chiles, of Missouri. Probably many a disheartened member of that party received new courage as a result of this brief contact with members of the government expedition.

Frémont followed the Republican River through a "beautifully watered and handsomely timbered" country, over which scampered herds of antelope and elk. The spring had been unusually wet, and the soft ground made travel slow. On June 16, after placing Fitzpatrick in charge of the main expedition with orders to proceed to St. Vrain's Fort, Frémont took fifteen companions and began a series of explorations which covered the country between the South Platte and the Arkansas rivers, from Fort Morgan to Pueblo. Near the latter place Kit Carson again joined the Lieutenant. Here, too, Frémont learned that an expedition which he had sent to Taos for supplies was not likely to secure them because of disturbances there. Carson was then sent down the Arkansas to Bent's Fort with orders to secure additional mules and take them directly to St. Vrain's Fort.

Frémont arrived at St. Vrain's for the second time on July 23, having explored a principal branch of the Arkansas and completed a survey of some of the sources of the Kansas and South Platte rivers and the country around Colorado Springs. There was a brief reunion at the fort, then the party was divided again, Fitzpatrick conducting the main force across the plains to the south of the Laramie River and along the emigrant route to Fort Hall,

¹ See the map facing this page.

while Frémont led an exploring expedition west and north over the mountains. His main purpose was to look for a pass. Frémont Pass, just north of Leadville, Colorado, may have been explored at this time.

On this trip northward Frémont must have passed near Estes Park and on July 31 he camped on the Laramie River west of the town of that name. Continuing on August 1, he traveled along the foot of the Medicine Bow Mountains, crossed the most western branch of the Laramie, probably near modern Carbon, Wyoming, and came to an excellent buffalo region on the North Platte somewhere in the vicinity of Rawlins, Wyoming. Thence, turning north into the valley of the Sweetwater River, he came to the regular overland trail, and crossed the divide on August 13, through the South Pass. Near the Wyoming-Idaho boundary he reached the Bear River, and descended it. Through that country the Lieutenant was in frequent contact with emigrants who were crossing to the Pacific Coast and who were doubtless heartened by his presence.

Near the most northern bend of Bear River is Beer Springs, or Soda Springs as it is called today. The peculiar character of the water attracted Frémont's attention and he spent some time in exploring the region. Then he turned south along Bear River to visit Great Salt Lake. Indeed, one of the principal objects of the expedition, he says, was to make a careful examination of this inland sea. The days were exceedingly busy and the evenings were occupied in obtaining "emersions" of Jupiter or his satellites. The habits and customs of the Digger Indians also attracted his attention and drew extensive comments from his pen.

From the top of a hill about twelve miles from Bear

River, Frémont and his little party had their first view of the lake. This was on September 6, and three days later they launched the rubber boat, brought for the purpose, on its waters. The island to which they steered their course was bare and rugged, but provided with a good beach. Here they spent the night, placing no guards and giving no thought to the arrangement of their weapons. Cut off from the mainland as they were, a feeling of perfect security possessed them and Frémont believed they were the first white men to set foot on the island.

The temptation to make further explorations here tugged hard at the judgment of the Lieutenant, but the "lengthening snow on the mountains" warned him that he must move on. Besides, food was scarce. The men were living on roots, with occasionally a wild fowl brought down by their rifles.

Their morale hit its lowest point on September 13. Frémont noticed a total lack of swearing. Not even a solitary *enfant de garce* was heard in camp that evening, and Frémont blamed this downcast spirit to hunger. The next day he permitted them to kill a fat, young horse, just bought from the Indians, and the men were more cheerful around the campfires that evening. This spirit was maintained by the arrival of Fitzpatrick with supplies, and the little party soon joined the main division at Fort Hall.

From this post Frémont secured horses and oxen and resumed the western journey following the south bank of the Snake River. Chiles's company was met again west of Fort Hall. On September 27 Frémont divided his party once more, leaving the twelve or fourteen wagons in charge of the faithful Fitzpatrick, while he moved ahead with a lighter expedition.

By October 1 the Lieutenant reached "Fishing Falls"

cataracts which formed a barrier to the ascent of the salmon. Below the cataracts bands of Indians were found scattered along the bank fishing, and invariably they approached the Americans for trade. But hawks' bills, beads, and vermilion did not appeal to them; they wanted clothing. Many of them were but partly dressed—an overcoat, a shirt, a waistcoat, or some other single article of clothing frequently constituting the native's complete attire.

On the morning of October 9, Frémont came to Fort Boise, on the right bank of Snake River, where he left that stream and crossed to the Malheur in Oregon on October 11, coming to the Snake again the following day. October 13 found him in the vicinity of the mouth of the Burnt River. He had crossed from the Great Basin to the Western Slope. Descending the basin of the "Grande Ronde," he left the emigrant trail in order to open a more direct route over the Blue Mountains, and came to the Whitman settlements in the "Walla Walla" valley on October 24. A short day's journey brought him to the Columbia, and traveling along the south bank of that stream, passing many emigrants on their way to Oregon, the expedition reached The Dalles on November 4. The main expedition did not go beyond this point. The leader, with a few followers, took boat for Fort Vancouver to get supplies for the return trip, and was back with them by November 18.

Another object of his expedition had been realized; he had connected with the Wilkes expedition which had been along the Northwest Coast.

On the return, it was Frémont's purpose to explore the Klamath Lake country, to visit the so-called St. Mary's Lake, and to find the reported Buenaventura River. With

two such well-informed men as Fitzpatrick and Carson in his party it is difficult to accept seriously the last intention. The trappers knew this country pretty well. His two guides must have known, as well as the trapping fraternity, that there was no such stream as the Buenaventura River.

On November 25, all wheeled vehicles except the howitzer were discarded, two Indian guides were found in the vicinity of The Dalles, and Frémont began his homeward journey. The trip westward had been a pleasure excursion compared to the hardships they were to experience on their return. The party now consisted of twenty-five men and one hundred and four horses and mules and carried supplies for three months.

From the layman's point of view the maintenance of horses through sections generally regarded as practically barren is one of the puzzling achievements of these explorations. For two days between The Dalles and Klamath Lake there was no grazing, and on two occasions the expedition had to melt snow to get water for the stock. But for these expeditions animals were selected that were accustomed to forage, not only through the summer, when grass was abundant, but during the long, hard winters when fasts were frequent and protracted. Then there was the nutriment of native grasses and shrubs. The value of this was brought to the attention of the explorers many times through experiences in desolate parts of the country. It was discovered when cattle, left to perish one winter in a basin of the Rockies, were found next spring fat and sleek-coated. In short, Nature has provided more nourishment for man and beast in the mountains than the layman realizes.

Frémont reached Klamath Marsh on December 10.

His journey south from The Dalles had been in the vicinity of the Deschutes River through a rough country with the mountains on his right. Gullies of basaltic rock, high country, broken and partly timbered, mountain ridges formed of compact lava, plains covered at intervals with forests of pine or cedar—these helped give character to the region, and with the precipitous, narrow, chasm-like valleys, formed by the numerous streams which he crossed, extended the period of his march and made it more difficult for the animals. But the area covered was fairly well known to the guides. The experiences in the country south from Klamath were to assume more of the character of real exploration and discovery.

While he could secure no satisfactory information, he says, Frémont expected to find replacements and recruits for his animals while crossing the desert at St. Mary's Lake and at Buenaventura River. St. Mary's was the name given to the modern Humboldt Lake in Nevada. One of the two proposed recruiting grounds was known, but it would afford only meager supplies, if any; and, as already indicated, it is difficult to understand how Frémont could have believed the other existed. As a matter of fact, he was destined to follow a course quite different from the one proposed.

Frémont's account of his route through this section is confusing because he was unfamiliar with the geography of the region. He thought he was at Klamath Lake when he reached Klamath Marsh. He believed the Williamson River, which flows through it, was the Klamath River. He thought the Klamath River reached the Pacific north of the forty-second parallel, hence was within territory belonging to the United States, whereas it flows through territory which at that time belonged to Mexico, that is,

through California. A little later he believed himself on the upper Sacramento, or Pitt River, when he really was in the country between Klamath Marsh and Summer Lake. He was lost and did not know it.

The Lieutenant had established his camp on the western edge of Klamath Marsh. December 11 was spent there to afford the horses an opportunity to graze and to recover somewhat from the hardships of the trip south from The Dalles. He believed he was in the midst of Indians who had attacked him earlier, but again he was mistaken. This thought led to the establishment of extra precautions against Indian attacks. Firing the howitzer soon after choosing his camp site probably did as much as anything to intimidate the natives and keep them quiet.

The journey was resumed on December 12, with hardships besetting it. The expedition headed east across the marsh and for approximately two hours the men struggled to get their pack animals over the mile and a half of icy surface between the camp and the shore of the marsh. With slippery ice under foot and snow falling thickly, the animals found difficult footing and, once down, their packs made it impossible for them to get up without help.

The route eastward from the marshland the next day was no easier. Fallen trees impeded their path and from twelve to fourteen inches of snow covered the ground. Men and animals floundered on, however, and the mules tugged at the howitzer. Four hours of this brought them to a "considerable stream, with a border of good grass," and camp was established.

The difficulties of the march were increasing, rather than diminishing, as the trail became more and more obscure, and, in spite of careful conservation, the food supply

was shrinking. The fasts became longer and the call upon reserve strength became greater.

Conditions did not improve during the next two days. The Klamath Indians, a few of whom, with their chief, had acted as guides from the vicinity of the camp of December 10, turned back at this point. Up the gradual slope of a mountain covered with pine forests, beneath the boughs of which the snow reached a depth of two or three feet, the party labored. The crust on the surface was just firm enough to hold the animals a second before giving way and was sharp enough to cut their legs as they struggled to extricate themselves. A physical test began for man and beast. About noon on December 16 they came to the edge of the forest and found themselves on the brink of a cliff. More than a thousand feet below they saw a beautiful lake in the midst of a green prairie, bordered with luxuriant grass. From an Italian hell they looked down into a region of sunshine; from "Winter Ridge" they looked out over "Summer Lake." And the latter name became definitely attached to this body of water on current maps.

The route from Summer Lake was in a generally southeastern direction. On December 20 the party came to another lake, "much larger" than the first. In honor of the chief of his corps, of whose attempt to halt the expedition he was unaware, the Lieutenant called it "Lake Abert." The water was not fit to drink, and the country around smacked of the desert. Grass was scarce and a chenopodiaceous shrub, which grew luxuriantly, provided the only firewood. Along the western shore of Lake Abert they traveled until December 22. Again taking a generally southeastern direction Frémont came to a small lake on December 25, which was named Christmas Lake the next

morning. Evidently it was one of several small bodies of water which later came together, and the whole is known today as Warners Lake.

From Warners Lake the party followed a route, generally south, into what is now Nevada. On the night of December 26 a horse was stolen by the Indians. The next day they came suddenly upon a small village of natives whom Frémont considered "among human beings, the nearest approach to mere animal creation." They lived on the roots or seeds they had stored up and on an occasional rabbit they sometimes tracked in the snow. Herded together, almost naked among the bushes, eight or ten of them lived under the same little sagebrush shelter. The speed with which they scampered off among the rocks and the intense fear which seized one of the women captured by Carson and Godey led Frémont to believe these Indians had "never before seen the face of a white man."

Although traveling south along the western edge of the desert with the Sierra Nevada Mountains on his right, through a country which must have appeared forbidding indeed, Frémont was in frequent contact with evidences of human life. The Indians prowled about his camp at night, and stole horses on at least two occasions. On December 29 he came upon a broad trail, directly across his route, made by Indians on horseback.

The route, too, was the scene of alternate elation and despair—elation on December 30 at thinking that they were about to break through their difficulties, and despair at finding on the next day that their predicament was worse than ever. It was a dreary New Year that greeted them in 1844. On January 3 they came into a dense fog through which it was impossible to see a hundred yards. This continued for three days.

Frémont's journal is interspersed with such phrases as "our situation had now become serious" or the exercise of great "caution" was necessary. A mule left the herd, came into camp, and died. By January 9 the Lieutenant had lost fifteen animals, counting those stolen by the Indians and others that had given out because of the injured condition of their feet. He determined that he would conduct foraging expeditions ahead of the main party and would leave one encampment only when he was assured of another, continuing this plan until he reached a country of water and vegetation. In this way he moved his camp southward after January 8.

On January 10 he came upon a large and beautiful lake which was "set like a gem in the mountains." Frémont called it Pyramid Lake, from a remarkable rock which rose "about six hundred feet" above the water and presented a strikingly "exact outline of the great pyramid of Cheops." Here on the border of the lake he killed the last of the cattle that had been driven from The Dalles for food.

Until he reached the south end of the lake Frémont appeared to think it might be the St. Mary's for which he had been searching. Then he decided definitely that it was not, but was a hitherto unknown body of water. A river flowed into it there, and in the valley, at the mouth of the stream and along the border of the lake, he found Indians of a type different from the miserable desert tribes. They were better nourished and better armed, and were more active. More than usual care was here exercised in choosing a camp site and in placing guard.

An Indian brought a large fish into camp to trade, and the men gathered about him eagerly. It proved to be a salmon trout. Many others were produced by the natives,

and the men enjoyed the luxury of a salmon-trout feast. Some were boiled, some fried, and others roasted in the ashes, and every few minutes an Indian ran off to spear a fresh one for the feast.

The route the next day was along the river at the mouth of which he had camped. He called the stream Salmon Trout River, but it is known today as the Truckee. The company left the stream where it issues from the mountains the next day, January 17, and continued south. The Lieutenant passed twenty or twenty-five miles east of Reno, and came to the Carson City of today. Each new stream aroused fresh interest. Frémont hoped each would prove to be the much-sought Buenaventura River, and Carson and Fitzpatrick, he says, eagerly examined each in turn to see if beaver cuttings were in evidence. To them this would have been a sure sign that the stream flowed to the Pacific and would have established beyond question this mythical river.

Throughout this part of the route, smoke from Indian signal fires was almost constantly visible during the day, indicating the alarm felt by the natives at the presence of white men. Continuing south and passing east of Carson City they worked closer in toward the mountains, looking for a pass. Frémont had changed his plans. He had determined to cross the Sierra into California rather than attempt the journey eastward. The principal reason for this was the wretched condition of his animals. In the valley to the west he hoped to find pasture and a place where the live stock might recuperate.

The exact route taken by the expedition between January 20 and February 20 is not easily followed. We know that Frémont's reckoning is not correct in many instances, but it is near enough to give an idea of his encampment

from time to time. He undoubtedly followed the Carson River for some distance, and passed through Carson Valley. He went south to Walker River and ascended that stream, following the western branch and apparently proceeding south to the eastern branch. Probably he ascended one of the principal tributaries of this stream to the vicinity of Bridgeport, California. Then he moved north to the Carson River again. He had a camp at one time in the vicinity of Marklesville, and throughout this region Indians were frequent visitors.

The fact that tribes or settlements of these people lived here the year around indicates that the country was not as barren of things essential to the sustenance of human life as has been imagined. The pine nuts gathered from the pine trees in the vicinity seem to have had considerable nutritive value. These with the occasional game killed or captured by the natives constituted their food through the long winter months. Frémont had access to this native larder and with the white man's weapons he had a big advantage in the pursuit of game. In addition he had a supply of horses and mules that could be used for food if necessary. The white man had here to reduce his standard of living to something nearer that of the native, but Frémont's men had done this before.

The real difficulty came in fighting their way through the snow as they struggled to reach the summit of the Sierra. Among the Indians who came into camp on the evening of January 31, Frémont found one who had been among the whites in the Sacramento Valley, and after some persuasion, in the form of a generous present of goods, induced him to join the party as a guide.

Snow began to fall during the night and it continued throughout the next day, causing gloom among the men.

Frémont observed their discouragement and during the morning attempted to cheer and hearten them for the passage of the mountains.

"Almost directly west, and only about seventy miles distant," he said, "is the great farming establishment of Captain Sutter." Carson had been in the Sacramento Valley about fifteen years earlier, and in the midst of their hardships had frequently regaled the men with descriptions of that wonderful country. So, in the midst of the snowstorm and while they were still in camp, Frémont informed them that it was his intention to cross the mountains into that valley, and impressed them with the need of courage and haste. They received the decision "with cheerful obedience."

Conditions were getting bad, but they were not as desperate as some of Frémont's admirers would have us believe. There were members of his party, doubtless, who lived more luxuriously while traveling with him than they did at home. The fact that they had no grease of any kind remaining was not as serious as it may appear, for reasons already indicated, but the want of salt was a real privation.

The snow stopped on February 2, and "six or seven thousand feet above, the peaks of the Sierra now and then appeared among the rolling clouds." The sun came out and the men broke camp. The river on which they were located (probably the east fork of the Carson) was covered with ice. They crossed this and headed for the mountains.

They had not gone far when they came to deep, almost impassable snow. To fight their way through, the expedition organized a party of ten men, mounted on the best horses the camp afforded, into a path-breaking unit. Each

in turn, on foot and on horseback, plunged into the mass of whiteness, driving an opening through it, until man and beast were exhausted. Then the worker would return to the end of the line of ten and wait his turn again. In this way a path was cleared.

The expedition passed two low huts, entirely covered with snow. A family was living in each, but the only trail Frémont saw in the neighborhood led from the "door hole to a nut-pine tree" near by, which bore their food supply.

The task of breaking a road became more difficult. They were able to make only seven miles on February 3. The next day, "after a laborious plunging through two or three hundred yards, our best horses gave out . . . , and for the time, we were brought to a stand."

The guide informed the Lieutenant that they were entering the deep snow, "and here began the difficulties of the mountain; and to him, and to almost all, our enterprise seemed hopeless." All day the party struggled to ascend a hill, but only the best horses succeeded. These could not make it with their packs, "and all the line of road between this and the springs was strewed with camp stores and equipage, and horses floundering in snow."

As a result two camps had to be made. Frémont, with the few who had ascended, established quarters on the hill, and Fitzpatrick went back to take charge of the encampment of the preceding night.

Two Indians came into camp that evening and added gloomy predictions to the troubles of the party. They offered to lead Frémont to an easier crossing of the mountains, urging him to give up his present route as impossible. Their warnings discouraged Frémont's Indian guide, who covered his head with his blanket and wept.

"I wanted to see the whites," he moaned. "I came away from my own people to see the whites and I wouldn't care to die among them, but here . . ."

Frémont refused the offer of the two Indians, but their ominous talk had its effect, for next morning the frightened guide was gone, carrying a blanket as well as the presents he had been given to lead the way over the mountains. The expedition was left to find its way as best it could.

The fifth of February was spent in camp, bringing up baggage and making sledges and snowshoes. The next day, with a small party including Fitzpatrick and Carson, Frémont climbed one of the peaks in the vicinity, a distance of about ten miles, and looked down upon the Sacramento Valley. Beyond the valley, "at a distance of about a hundred miles," Carson recognized the Coast Range.

"There is the little mountain," he exclaimed. "It is fifteen years since I saw it, but I am just as sure as if I had seen it yesterday." But many miles of snowfields and broken ridges of pine-covered mountains lay between them and the plain below. In descending the mountain one of the men gave out and his feet began to freeze. He was left in the care of Fitzpatrick while the others pushed on to camp.

Until February 20 the little party struggled to reach the summit of the range. Sometimes the sleighs which they had built, loaded with camp equipment and drawn over the snow by the men, made a path sufficiently solid to sustain the animals. At other times passage was made through the use of brush and mauls. Both men and horses grew weak from want of food. Bare spots with grass were rare, and it was mainly upon the discovery of such that food for the animals depended.

But on "February 20, 1844, we encamped with the animals and all the material of the camp, on the summit of the pass in the dividing ridge, one thousand miles by our traveled road from The Dalles of the Columbia," and there was new courage among the men as a result of this achievement.

They were established on the ridge of Carson Pass. The tourist who travels the road today may read the following inscription on the side of a big bowlder, placed there by a committee of the Native Sons of the Golden West:

ON THIS SPOT, WHICH MARKS THE SUMMIT
OF THE KIT CARSON PASS, STOOD WHAT
WAS KNOWN AS THE KIT CARSON TREE ON
WHICH THE FAMOUS SCOUT, KIT CARSON,
INSCRIBED HIS NAME IN 1844 WHEN HE
GUIDED THE THEN COLONEL JOHN C. FRÉMONT,
HEAD OF A GOVERNMENT EXPLORING EXPEDI-
TION, OVER THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS.
ABOVE IS A REPLICA OF THE ORIGINAL
INSCRIPTION CUT FROM THE TREE IN 1888,
AND NOW IN SUTTER'S FORT, SACRAMENTO.

The descent was not to be as easy as Frémont thought it would be. Their most difficult day was February 23. Deep snow compelled them to leave the ridge and take to the mountainside, which was steep and treacherous. Some wore moccasins with soles so slippery that they could not keep their feet, but had to crawl across the snow beds. Axes and mauls were used frequently to make passageways. In attempting to leap over a small stream Frémont fell in, and Carson, thinking he was hurt, leaped in after him. Both received an icy bath, which added to the discomforts of the day's laborious march.

In this fashion the expedition worked its way down.

Mules and horses provided food for the men, but there was little grass for the animals. The latter weakened and fell by the way. A mule, bearing plants collected since leaving Fort Hall, slipped over a precipice with its floral treasure. Other valuable packs were lost with their bearers. Of the sixty-seven horses and mules attached to the expedition when the Lieutenant began to ascend the Sierra, thirty-three reached the valley of the Sacramento, and these were worthless as pack animals.

The men suffered despite their advantage over the animals, but not a man was lost. Charles Towns became mentally weakened and strayed off occasionally, or attempted to swim in the river "as if it were summer and the stream placid, when it was a cold, mountain torrent foaming among rocks." Derosier had gone back to bring up Frémont's favorite horse, Proveau, which had given out on February 28 and had been left behind temporarily. He came back into camp on March 1. It was evident that his mind was deranged, and he did not have the horse.

"Times were severe when stout men lost their minds from extremity of suffering, when horses died, and when mules and horses, ready to die of starvation, were killed for food. Yet there was no murmuring or hesitation."

Preuss, too, was lost for three days, but reached camp without suffering serious consequences. The party had been descending a branch of the American River. On March 6 they came to where it joined the northern branch. The main stream they thought to be the Sacramento. They were now in the valley and traveling over ground covered with grass and spring flowers. Frémont with a small party reached Fort Sutter and, securing supplies, returned to meet Fitzpatrick with the main party. "A more forlorn and pitiable sight than they presented," ex-

claims the Lieutenant, "cannot be imagined. They were all on foot—each man weak and emaciated—leading a horse or mule as weak" as himself. The abundant supply of food which Frémont brought helped to restore the hopes of the men, and the animals found rich grass in ample quantity in the valley. On March 8, 1844, the entire party was united in camp at Fort Sutter.

The community at Fort Sutter was thrown into bustling activity by the arrival of Frémont and his party. Their wants were many. Animals were to be purchased, food was required, and supplies of various kinds were to be procured. The flour mill was operated day and night. The blacksmith shop labored over horseshoes and bridle bits. In other quarters packsaddles, ropes, and various essentials were prepared.

By March 22 the leader began concluding his preparations, and two days later the homeward journey was resumed. He had an ample stock of provisions, one hundred and thirty horses and mules, and about thirty head of cattle, five of which were milk cows. Sutter had contributed an Indian boy who had been trained as a *vaquero* and whose services would be valuable in handling the animals, many of which were "as wild as buffaloes."

The expedition that left Sutter's Fort on March 24 was quite a different company from the one which had come straggling into that place during the early days of the month. The men were in high spirits as they headed south through the San Joaquin Valley. The Lieutenant fairly gurgled with joy as he rode through the grass, and "out of the warm, green spring" looked up at the snow-capped Sierra where the party had lately suffered so much. Occasionally there was some difficulty, particularly at the Stanislaus River, in getting the animals across

the numerous streams which flow from the mountains into the San Joaquin, but this was a minor obstacle compared with the experience of the recent past.

Frémont was a keen observer of nature and he reveled in the variety of flora and fauna along this route. The California poppy, the blue lupine, *la yerba buena*, antelope, elk, wild horses, great quantities of feathered animals ranging from the large fishing-eagle to the humming bird—all of these, together with the character of the soil, the streams, and the timber found space in his journal.

The expedition must have passed near the present sites of Stockton and Fresno and along the eastern border of Tulare Lake. Continuing south by way of Bakersfield, it crossed the mountains, skirted the desert, and turned east within a day's ride of Los Angeles, passing along the southern border and coming to the old Spanish trail, probably in the vicinity of Cajon Pass. Their route over this famous old trail lay along the present Santa Fe railroad from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City. Frémont had anticipated pleasant travel over this road, but he found it one of the most trying of his entire trip. It had been described to him as a "tolerably good, sandy road with so little rock as scarcely to require the animals to be shod," but he found it rough and so laid with sharp stones that it came near destroying the usefulness of his horses and mules.

The cavalcade must have presented a motley appearance as it passed along the edge of the desert and followed the foot of the mountains east to the Spanish trail. Although consisting of a score or less it included a Chinook Indian from the Columbia, a German, Frenchmen, and Americans. Sometimes four or five languages could be heard at once. American, Spanish, and Indian costumes

were worn. More than a hundred horses and mules, many of them half-wild, and several cattle completed the expedition. They traveled with a front and rear division, the pack-animals, baggage, and horned cattle in the center, and scouts ahead and on the flanks. Whether or not the procession retained this order of march through the tribulations of the desert, Frémont does not say.

Traveling ahead of the annual caravan that operated between Los Angeles and Santa Fe, the Lieutenant's expedition had a better chance at the meager grass supply scattered along the trail. And yet he did not have a complete monopoly of this grazing. A company of six Mexicans who had traveled with a small drove of horses ahead of Frémont until they were attacked by Indians had had first access to the scattered pasturage along the desert route. The Indian attack had halted the Mexican expedition and driven two of its members back over the trail for help. These men were Andres Fuentes and a lad, Pablo Hernandez, and the tale they told illustrates the dangers of travel over even this well-beaten route.

Fuentes with his wife and the father and mother of Pablo had left Los Angeles with about thirty horses under the guidance of a resident of New Mexico. They had reached a good camping-ground in the vicinity of the present eastern boundary of California and had halted to await the great caravan in order to travel to Santa Fe under its protection. They thought they had halted west of the range of Indian prowlers who lived off the plunder taken from defenseless people passing over that part of the trail, but they were mistaken. Soon a few Indians visited the camp quietly, then disappeared. Before long they were back with an attacking party.

While Pablo's father and the guide fought the Indians,

Pablo and Fuentes, driving fifteen or twenty horses ahead of them, fled back over the trail for help. Finding what they believed a safe pasturage, they left the herd, then raced on until they reached Frémont's camp. The explorer promised them help. Fuentes and Pablo turned back with him to the spring beside which they had left the horses, only to find that all were gone. An examination of the ground convinced Frémont that the Indians had stolen them.

The adventurous Carson, with Godey, volunteered to follow the outlaws and recover the horses. Fuentes started with them, but was poorly mounted and had to turn back. Following the trail of the marauders and the horses was a simple matter for woodsmen like Carson and Godey and they soon found the Indian camp. Reconnoitering, they saw they were greatly outnumbered, but that deterred them not at all.

Securing their horses, they boldly attacked the camp, shouting ferociously during the onslaught. Two Indians were brought down, but the others escaped, making off at top speed. Having put the rest to rout, Carson and Godey proceeded to scalp their two victims in approved Indian fashion. One of them, unfortunately, was not dead and, regaining consciousness as the scalp was being ripped from his head, leaped to his feet and started to run off, howling with pain, blood pouring down his face. He was instantly shot.

With the scalps dangling gruesomely from the barrel of Godey's gun the two heroes came back to camp, driving some of the stolen horses before them. The others were beyond recovery, for they had been killed and when Godey and Carson descended upon the camp their flesh had been cooking over the camp fires.

Frémont was more than pleased with the success of his men. "The time, place, object, and numbers considered, this expedition of Carson and Godey may be considered among the boldest and most disinterested which the annals of Western adventure, so full of daring deeds, can present. Two men in a savage desert pursue, day and night, an unknown body of Indians into the defiles of an unknown mountain, attack them on sight, without counting numbers, and defeat them in an instant—and for what? To punish the robbers of the desert, and to assuage the wrongs of Mexicans whom they did not know. I repeat: it was Carson and Godey who did this—the former an American, born in the Boonslick country of Missouri; the latter a Frenchman, born in St. Louis—and both trained to Western enterprise from early life."

And opposite the account in the *Memoirs* appears a large picture of the returning horses, with the gory scalps still dangling from the muzzle of Godey's gun!

We are told that we must not judge earlier generations by the standards of our own, but we cannot always suppress reactions to the conduct of those who lived in an earlier and a different environment. It is not desirable that we should. We may question the motives which Frémont gives to the adventure of Carson and Godey. These may be truly but not comprehensively indicated. There was something of a lark in the undertaking which appealed to those men. And since they were considered by the Lieutenant as among his ablest followers, the qualities which were essential to "making good" in the work in which he was engaged naturally suggest themselves.

In a tolerant mood one might say these included courage, endurance, ability to adapt one's self to hardships in the camp and on the road, readiness to co-operate in

emergencies, patience in scarcity, and long-suffering in periods of famine. All of these were essential, but something more was necessary. There was something of the savage required—indeed very much of this quality was demanded. Carson was a “good man” because he was more successful in savagery than the savages with whom he dealt. There was a real thrill in an adventure such as the one recorded above, and a part of the wild joy experienced came from taking the scalp. This distinguished him and Godey from the common run of expedition members. It made a hero of Kit Carson such as Charles Preuss never could have been.

It was on the afternoon of April 26 that Carson and Godey returned with their bloody trophies, and on the same day the expedition resumed its march. Traveling by night to avoid the intense heat of desert days, they started for the next camp site, estimated as forty or fifty miles distant. They did not reach a suitable spot until April 28.

The following day their route led them to the camp from which Pablo and Fuentes had fled, and they came upon a grim sight. The tide of Indians had engulfed the camp, smothering the resistance of Hernandez and the guide, whose mutilated bodies, lying in the midst of evidences of a great struggle, told plainly the story of their stand against the raiders. There were no signs of the women’s bodies. They had been taken captive.

“Mi padre, mi padre!” The moans of the heart-broken Pablo rang in Frémont’s ears.

Leaving a note in the cleft of a pole for the information of the caravan and naming the place Agua de Hernandez in commemoration of the tragedy, the expedition continued the line of march. Apparently the party crossed

the California-Nevada line near a place called Stump Spring to Las Vegas Valley, reaching that place on May 3. The route from this place to the next suitable camping-ground proved to be the most arduous of the desert journey. Frémont estimated the distance at fifty or sixty miles. It took them more than sixteen hours of steady marching to cross the country, and during that period they were without water.

"Travelers through countries affording water and timber can have no conception of our intolerable thirst while journeying over the hot yellow sands of this elevated country, where the heated air seems to be entirely deprived of moisture," is his comment.

The skeletons of horses strewn along the way constantly reminded them of a possible fate. Near midnight of May 4 the wild mules began running ahead and the men knew these animals had scented water. A mile or two brought them "to a bold, running stream." They were on Muddy River, a tributary of the Virgin, probably in the vicinity of Moapa in the southeastern corner of Nevada. Here they remained a day to recuperate. But the hostile attitude of the Indians did not permit them to tarry longer.

This was a part of the section infested by Indian outlaws. Frémont believed they were the ones who had killed the Mexicans. His party was strong enough to prevent the natives from attempting an open attack, but they hovered longingly about the camp for several days watching for stragglers. On May 10 a man named Tabran wandered off and was killed. Then the Indians suddenly disappeared, probably to avoid reprisals.

Continuing in a northeasterly direction the Lieutenant led his little company to the "Santa Clara Fork" of the Virgin River. This is in the southwestern corner of the

present state of Utah. The route was within view of the Great Basin for several days. On May 17 they left the old Spanish trail, which turned off over the mountains toward the southeast, and were faced with the difficult task of exploring a new path through the wilderness. Fortunately for Frémont, Joseph Walker, who had been with the great caravan from California, had left that expedition and hurried ahead with a few companions to join Frémont's party. He caught up with them on May 12. He knew this part of the country better than anyone else and became the guide.

Traveling northeast the party came to the Sevier River at its most northern point where it turns west and southwest to flow into Sevier Lake. Crossing the river proved difficult, but was finally accomplished without loss. However, an accidental discharge of a gun resulted in the death of François Badeau here, and he was buried on the banks of the river. He had been with Frémont on the first expedition. After that misfortune the route to Utah Lake was traversed without mishap, the expedition arriving on May 24.

On several occasions Frémont noted the presence of Utah Indians. One band appeared on May 20, headed by a chief who had taken the English name of Walker, after the Lieutenant's guide. The Indians were all well mounted and armed with rifles, and were riding slowly toward the Spanish trail to levy their annual tribute on the California caravan. They were robbers of a high order, Frémont says, and conducted their depredations with a certain dignity, collecting toll for safe passage through their country.

From Utah Lake, by way of the Spanish Fork, across the headwaters of Price River, over the upper end of Strawberry Creek and other small streams that rise in

that vicinity, through the valley at the foot of the Uintah Mountains, the expedition worked its way to the Colorado River. The country was rough, but there was food for the horses, and game was more abundant. The Lieutenant led his men into what is now the northwestern part of the state of Colorado, across Vermillion Creek to a tributary of the Yampa, probably the Little Snake River. Up this stream he went to St. Vrain's Fork and ascended the latter. They were in a country rich in game, grass, and water, and infested with hostile Indians. On June 13 they left St. Vrain's Fork and turned to the ridge forming the great divide. That same afternoon they looked out over the valley of the North Platte. They were about two degrees south of the South Pass. The journey down to the headwaters of that stream was made easily.

Frémont might have descended to the well-known trail along the Platte and by easy stages returned to the settlement, but he wanted to examine the headwaters of the Grand and the Arkansas. Turning up the North Platte he once more crossed to the west side of the divide, descended Muddy Creek to the head of Red Gorge, came down Blue River, and crossed the divide again probably through Hoosier Pass.

Considerable caution and tact were necessary throughout this portion of the journey to avoid conflict with the Indians. On one occasion, only a low ridge separated Frémont from a bitter battle in which five hundred Utes and Arapahoes were engaged.

Descending a tributary of the South Platte until June 24, 1844, and bearing southeast, Frémont crossed to one of the streams which flowed into the Arkansas. This required days of hard travel through a rugged, mountainous country. He camped at Pueblo on the night of June 29,

and on July 1 arrived at Bent's Fort. This marks practically the end of the exploration. Carson and Walker remained at the fort, and Frémont turned out across the prairies, through the Indian country, toward the point of his departure the year before, arriving on the last day of July. He had been absent fourteen months, and despite the hardships and suffering there had been but two cases of sickness in his party.

VI. THE LAST OFFICIAL EXPEDITION AND THE BEAR FLAG REVOLT

When Frémont led his valiant little company into the frontier post on the banks of the Kansas during the last day of July, 1844, he found that for months his safety had been a matter of national concern. Since the preceding November, when he had left the Columbia, no word had come from him, and through the long winter and spring alarm had grown among government officials and friends. The Secretary of War had gone so far as to offer to send a company of dragoons to search for the "lost" expedition, but had changed his mind when he was reminded that if Frémont, with his knowledge and skill, could not find his way out, the dragoons certainly would be unable to do it for him. News of his safe arrival relieved a long strain of anxiety which his friends had felt.

The Lieutenant brought with him from the Far West three Indian boys and a beautiful four-year-old horse which he called Sacramento. The latter was an excellent saddle animal, unusually courageous, and a splendid jumper. He was destined to remain a faithful companion of his master through many trying episodes. Under the care of two Indian lads, Juan and Gregorio, Sacramento was sent to Senator Benton's ranch in the bluegrass country near Lexington, Kentucky, to await the completion of plans for the next expedition. Chinook, the third Indian, was placed with a responsible Quaker family near Philadelphia. Frémont established himself in Washington to write the accounts of his explorations.

The months which followed were filled with interest and pleasurable occupation. Preuss was engaged in the

congenial task of preparing the maps. Frémont, with pleasant quarters in a small two-story house near the home of Senator Benton, with a young man, Joseph C. Hubbard, for an assistant and his loyal wife for a secretary, spent the days dictating his reports and some of the evenings in making astronomical observations for the purpose of brushing up in that important work.

Frémont and Hubbard were accustomed to take their observations in the vicinity of a church near by, where a large stone carriage-step near the curb afforded a convenient rest for their instruments. While waiting for the stars to come into the positions which they wanted, Frémont frequently threw himself on the ground and rested against the stone step. For several nights a deacon of the church had witnessed this action with displeasure. The hour was always late and the position Frémont assumed aroused his suspicion.

He finally determined to have a conference with Senator Benton. He was sorry to convey disagreeable information to the Senator, he said, but it was his duty to inform that official that for several nights his son-in-law had been seen lying on the pavement in front of the church in a gross state of intoxication, "apparently unwilling to allow a more sober companion who was with him to take him to the house." But information which the deacon thought would be received with gratitude by Benton provoked that official to wrath and led the informant to depart frightened and humiliated.

In the work of dictating, Frémont was particularly happy. Regularly at nine each morning Jessie joined him in the room which he called the workshop, and until one o'clock they were engaged in putting his report into final form. Then tea was served with a light luncheon. This

was usually followed by a short walk along the river, after which work was continued until dark. Dictation would continue for hours at a stretch and would be interrupted only when a point of exceptional interest brought questions from Jessie, followed by the Lieutenant's answers and mutual discussion. By March 1, 1845, the work was completed, and ten thousand extra copies of the first and second reports were ordered by Congress.

Meanwhile plans for a third expedition were prepared. It was to cover that part of the Rocky Mountains in which the Arkansas, the Rio Grande, and the Colorado take their rise, and was intended to complete the examinations of the region around Great Salt Lake. It was also to continue the examination of the Cascade and the Sierra Nevada toward the southwest, "so as to ascertain the lines of communication through these mountains to the ocean in that latitude. And in arranging this expedition, the eventualities of war were taken into consideration."¹

These were the intentions as given by Frémont in his *Memoirs* about forty years after the third expedition was completed. They were in harmony with the ideas he sponsored at the time he wrote, but they do not agree exactly with the facts as the latter developed in the spring of 1845. We shall return to these later.

Frémont left the frontier on his third expedition in the early summer of 1845 and crossed the plains immediately to Bent's Fort. Until August he was busy enlarging and organizing his company. Accompanied by sixty-two adventurers and explorers for companions, including a half-dozen Delaware Indians, he led his party up the Arkansas River to its source. The country was explored to Utah Lake, and toward the end of October he spent a week

¹ Frémont, *Memoirs*, pp. 411-415, 422.

examining Great Salt Lake. By the end of the month the expedition had entered Nevada, and the fifth of November found them in the vicinity of the headwaters of the Humboldt River. The party divided here, Frémont taking a few men to explore what became Elko, Eureka, Nye, and Esmeralda counties of Nevada, and then joined the main division at Walker's Lake.

After a few days' rest the Lieutenant divided his company again. He led one division across the mountains to Sutter's Fort, agreeing to meet the other at a point in the upper San Joaquin Valley. Joseph Walker led the main division through Walker Pass to the supposed rendezvous at a place known as the "River of the Lake." Frémont secured supplies at Sutter's Fort and moved south to King's River. This was the place he understood he would meet the main division. The two divisions were waiting each for the other at different points. After several days on King's River Frémont returned to Sutter's Fort. The men in his division, about fifteen, he left there with directions to come later to Yerba Buena. Meanwhile he proceeded to that place and then to Monterey, arriving in January 1846.

While he was there an inquiry came from the Mexican general, Castro, to Larkin, the United States Consul, regarding the presence of American soldiers in California. In a courteous reply Frémont said that his men were not soldiers; that he was in command of a scientific expedition; that the major part of his expedition was still in the uninhabited part of the country; and that he had brought a few men with him to conduct his explorations toward Oregon. This explanation gained him permission to winter in California provided he would agree to keep away from the coast.

Meanwhile Walker had grown weary of waiting and had started with his part of the expedition north toward Sutter's Fort. En route he heard that Frémont with his party was in the Santa Clara Valley and that he was about to return to the San Joaquin to look again for the main division. Walker immediately shifted his route, and the two divisions came together in the Santa Clara Valley and camped on the Laguna ranch south of San Jose. After a few days there the party moved slowly toward the coast. They crossed the Santa Cruz Mountains by way of Los Gatos, and established camp in the Salinas Valley about twenty-five miles from Monterey.

While there, on March 5, Frémont received a letter from Castro directly, in which the Spanish officer remonstrated with the American explorer for entering the settlement with his party, and advised him to leave immediately. Frémont sent the messenger back with a flat refusal, moved his camp to the top of Hawk's Peak, and prepared to defend himself against an attack.

The incident created considerable excitement in the vicinity, and no doubt there was unnecessary blustering on both sides. Castro had complained to Larkin regarding the conduct of the American leader, and Larkin wrote to Frémont on March 8. The letter contains some mild admonitions and warnings, and suggests a more amicable adjustment of the controversy than Frémont appeared disposed to adopt. This letter was seized by Castro and forwarded to Mexico City as proof of the bad faith of both Larkin and Frémont, but a duplicate reached Frémont.

After three days in his fortified position Frémont abandoned the mountain and moved slowly northward. "The Spaniards were somewhat rude and inhospitable," he

wrote his wife, "... and ordered us¹ out of the country after having given me permission to winter there. My sense of duty did not permit me to fight them, but we retired slowly and growlingly before a force of three or four hundred men and three pieces of artillery Of course I did not dare to compromise the United States, against which appearances would have been strong; but though it was in my power to increase my party by many Americans, I refrained from committing a solitary act of hostility or impropriety. For my part I become disgusted with everything belonging to the Mexicans."

Frémont led his expedition into the San Joaquin Valley and north to the vicinity of New Helvetia. He continued north up the Sacramento and came to the region of the Klamath by the middle of May. At this point he was overtaken by Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, a member of the United States Marine Corps. Gillespie had been sent from Washington by the Department of State with special messages to Larkin and with communications for Frémont. Among the former were a letter of introduction from Buchanan to Larkin and a letter notifying Larkin of his appointment as confidential agent for the United States.

To Frémont, Gillespie brought a letter of introduction also and a packet which contained private letters from Thomas H. Benton, his father-in-law. The content of these has never been made known. The verbal message which he brought, it has been said with reasonable probability, must have been similar to the communications delivered to Larkin. That letter is available to any who may care to read it.² Although written to appoint and instruct

² John Bassett Moore, *The Works of James Buchanan*, VI, 275-278.

a confidential agent in California, and although it expresses the conviction that California will ultimately come into the United States regardless of the activity of foreign agents, it impresses caution and calls for the exercise of delicate tact.

There are two places in the letter which indicate that the government at Washington would welcome California into the Union provided it came upon the request of the Californians, following a successful revolt from Mexico, and provided it could "be done without affording Mexico just cause of complaint." Even this would be waived if rebellion in California followed an attempt of Mexico to transfer that province to Great Britain or France. This eventuality the United States declared its fixed intention to prevent.

The substance of the conversations between Frémont and Gillespie when the two met in northern California has provoked endless conjecture among readers and students of the incident. It has been taken for granted that the Marine officer must have confided fully in his host and given him liberal quantities of mysterious information which came directly from the governmental authorities at Washington and which was too important to be trusted to the ordinary channels of written instructions. The fact that these same officials were working and hoping for an amicable adjustment of the Mexican controversy and believed that such a settlement could be arranged at the time they prepared papers for and gave directions to Gillespie in November, 1845, does not enter into the speculations of these investigators. The incident affords a fertile field for conjecture, but the scope is not quite as limitless as has been supposed.

Gillespie must have been a gullible and garrulous of-

ficial, indeed, to have reported all that has been imagined he revealed around the campfires of those northern woods. Fortunately there is evidence of a discretion in his conversations which does credit to the judgment of the government in selecting him for so delicate a mission. We may assume that the governmental instructions delivered to Frémont by him contained the conciliatory admonitions found in the directions to Larkin and to other officials on the Pacific Coast, in conformity with the general policy of the government. But there was a clause in these instructions to Larkin of which evidently Gillespie did not inform Frémont. It ran as follows:

In addition to your Consular functions, the President has thought proper to appoint you a confidential agent in California; and you may consider the present dispatch as your authority for acting in this character. The confidence which he reposes in your patriotism and discretion is evinced by conferring upon you this delicate and important trust. You will take care not to awaken the jealousy of the French and English agents there by assuming any other than your Consular character. Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie of the Marine Corps will immediately proceed to Monterey, and will probably reach you before this dispatch. He is a gentleman in whom the President reposes entire confidence. He has seen these instructions and will cooperate as a confidential agent with you, in carrying them into execution.

Frémont did not know of this appointment³ as late as 1884. And Jessie Benton Frémont was sure that such an appointment was impossible.

Our house—our library and my father's committee room—were the real war department. In the time of the Mexican War the Brussels stair carpet leading to the library had to be renewed

³ J. Royce, "Interview with Frémont," as reported in a letter to Henry L. Oak, December 9, 1884, MS, in the Huntington Library Collection.

twice during the session of Congress, such was the stream of armed men, or rather men whose profession was arms, who passed up and down from that room. Mr. Buchanan had no fiber in him that responded to war or combativeness in any form. It was an utter impossibility that any move toward gaining California should have been made without my father's knowledge. And this idea of a secret mission given Larkin has simply *never* been heard of by me before. And it is an absurd idea that it would have availed against well-known English intentions and California preferences.⁴

Obviously Jessie did not share the President's distrust of her father, and it is equally obvious that Secretary of State Buchanan took his directions from the President rather than from the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs when notifying Larkin of his appointment as secret agent in California.

During the night following Gillespie's arrival, Indians attacked Frémont's camp, killing two or three men. Other occupations were promptly tossed into the discard while the Lieutenant punished the offenders. Not until he had taken satisfactory toll from the Indians around Klamath Lake was he willing to leave that section. Then, he says, we "turned away from our comrades whom I had left among the pines. But they were not neglected. When the Tlamaths tell the story of the night attack where they were killed, there will be no boasting. They will have to tell also of the death of their chief and of our swift retaliation; and how the people at the fishery had to mourn for the loss of their men and the destruction of their village. It will be a story for them to hand down while there are any Tlamaths on their lake."⁵

⁴ Mrs. J. C. Frémont, "Statement Concerning Secret Affairs Relating to the Mexican War," MS, in the Huntington Library Collection.

⁵ *Memoirs*, p. 496.

Frémont returned south and established camp at Lassen's ranch on May 24, and a few days later moved down to the Buttes south of the present city of Marysville.

The excitement among Americans and American officials in California and along the Pacific Coast became increasingly tense as spring days gradually lengthened into the summer of 1846. "The distant rumors of mighty events have made me leave the retirement of my farm to learn something of the truth," wrote one John March as early as February 15. "It appears that the present year will bring great changes over the face of California." Six days later an American Navy officer, E. Estabrook, who had recently entered the harbor of Mazatlan en route home from a cruise around the world, expressed his surprise at the number of United States war vessels anchored in that harbor, and wondered why they were assembled.

A few days later still, March 4, came the query from F. D. Atherton in far-off Valparaiso: "Why do not the Californians declare their absolute independence from Mexico? . . . Are there not wild Yankees enough . . . to take the management of affairs into their own hands?"⁶ And in answer to that question events were shaping themselves in California. Exclaimed Vice-Consul W. A. Leidesdorff, on April 25, "glorious news for Captain Frémont, I think I see him smile." It was news which he thought Mexican officials must possess, as the Sub-Prefecto was dispatching messengers to different parts of the country, and at least one of these had advised expectation of war with Mexico.

Leidesdorff probably referred to the content of a letter, dated April 23, which Larkin had written to Gillespie and

⁶ Larkin Documents, MS in the University of California Library, Berkeley, Bancroft Collection, Vol. IV, Nos. 24, 39, 47, 58.

which the latter had received in Yerba Buena just before he started north to overtake Frémont. The consul wrote:

Captain Montgomery [of the "Portsmouth"] is of the opinion that Commodore Sloat may, by the next mail [which would be within six or eight days] have a declaration on the part of the United States against Mexico, in which case we shall see him in a few days to take the country. I have (as my opinion) said to Generals Castro, Carrillo, and Vallejo that our flag may fly here in thirty days. The first says, for his own plans, war is preferable to peace.⁷

Speculation on the effect of such an outbreak of hostilities and the possibility for gain did not escape men engaged in various business enterprises in California. The merchant, Abel Stearns, observed the increasing rumors and wondered whether some might have authentic information which he had not. And he became philosophical. He would much prefer to have things remain as they were. The rancher might benefit from a change, but the merchant probably would not.

This was not the opinion of the Vice-Consul, who was also, apparently, a business man. Leidesdorff had sold "bullocks" to United States vessels of war, and requested Larkin to suggest to the commanders of all such vessels to purchase their meat supply through him. He would then be in a position to pay off a note Larkin held much more quickly. "As regards the hopes of a change, and the coming events, I can hardly express my pleasure. I only hope it will take place soon, as it will be a few thousand in my pocket"

Even the boatmen anticipated reward. If war was declared William H. Davis hoped Larkin would find em-

⁷ Quoted in Nevins, *Frémont*, I, 276-277.

ployment for his brig, since it was operated under a neutral flag.⁸

It was in the midst of this tense atmosphere of wonder, excitement, and anticipation of profit-sharing that Frémont pitched his camp at the Buttes of the Sacramento, near the junction of the Bear and Feather rivers, below the present town of Marysville, in the latter days of May, 1846. If he had any definite plan at all it was to return home within a few weeks, and this appears to have been quite definite.

On the first of April he wrote his wife: "I . . . shall be at Westport about the first of September." Within a few days of establishing camp, May 24, he wrote to his father-in-law that he expected to return home immediately by way of Colorado, but he said he could not "arrive at the frontier until late in September." This was also the impression he left with Lieutenant Gillespie, who was intimately associated with him at this time.

On the night of June 7 the Marine officer wrote Larkin from Yerba Buena that Frémont had sent him to the coast to purchase much-needed supplies before leaving for home. But the explorer continued to postpone his departure. As late as the sixteenth of June he was still planning to leave at once for home. It is "my present intention," he wrote to Captain John B. Montgomery, to "proceed immediately across the mountainous country to the eastward in the direction of the headwaters of the Arkansas River, and thence to the frontier of Missouri, where I expect to arrive early in September." But in the next sentence he says it will take him until about July first

⁸ Larkin Documents, MS in the University of California Library, Bancroft Collection, Vol. IV, Nos. 107, 110, 111, 119.

to "recruit" his animals and arrange his "equipage" for the long trip.

The same letter implies the development of conditions which might detain him, and indicates that he is still smarting under the "insults" experienced at Hawk's Peak. "I cannot consistently with my own feelings and respect for the national character of the duty in which I am engaged permit a repetition of the recent insults we have received from General Castro. If, therefore, any hostile moves are made in this direction, I will most assuredly meet or anticipate them; and with such intentions I am regulating my conduct to the people here. *The nature of my instructions and the peaceful nature of our operations do not contemplate any active hostility on my part, even in the event of war between the two countries,*⁹ and, therefore, although I am resolved to take such active and precautionary measures as I shall judge necessary for our safety, I am not authorized to ask from you any other than such assistance as, without incurring yourself unusual responsibility, you would feel at liberty to afford me. Such an emergency could not have been anticipated in any instructions;¹⁰ but, between Indians on the one hand and hostile people on the other, I trust that our government will not severely censure any efforts to which we may be driven in defense of our lives and character."

In a letter to his father-in-law written at Carmel Mission, July 25, 1846, Frémont asserted that he had actually formulated his plans ten days prior to the date of his letter to Captain Montgomery. "On the 6th of June I

⁹ The italics are mine.

¹⁰ Compare this with statement made in *Memoirs*, p. 442: "And in arranging this expedition the eventualities of war were taken into consideration."

decided on the course which I would pursue, and immediately concerted my operations with the foreigners inhabiting the Sacramento Valley." This, it will be remembered, was the day before Gillespie had written to Larkin as indicated above. But of course Gillespie had parted with Frémont before the sixth, and the latter could have come to his decision without Gillespie's being aware of the changed plans. But this is improbable. Confusion is produced when we compare this statement to his father-in-law with that made by Frémont in the *Century*, April, 1891. In the latter he "knew the hour had come" before he left Oregon, in fact just after receiving Gillespie's messages. But Frémont's memory could play him many tricks between 1846 and 1890.

A few days after this, horses were taken from Californians on the Consumnes River by a party of men from Frémont's camp. According to William B. Ide, Frémont suggested, on the tenth of June, a definite plan for producing war. This required the choice of a dozen men who had "*nothing to lose but everything to gain*," and who should be encouraged to take government horses forcibly from Castro's agents and to make prisoners of some of the prominent officials of California. The latter act would provoke Castro to begin hostilities, which in turn would lead to war between the United States and Mexico. The stolen horses would provide a means for the Americans to escape across the mountains to the United States. Ide refused to participate in the scheme.

From the letters and statements given above, certain conclusions appear to be justified. In the first place, Frémont's own account of what happened at Hawk's Peak is sufficient evidence of his indiscretion on that occasion, and his later statements indicate that his conduct created

embarrassments of a humiliating character. This may have produced an incentive to linger in California. He may have believed that American settlers were in danger and that, regardless of the absence of instructions for such a development, it was his duty to defend them. The statements made by Frémont in his letters at this time must be accepted instead of the claims and assertions made in his *Memoirs* many years later.

"Now it was officially made known to me [through the messages brought by Gillespie]," he wrote in these *Memoirs*, "that my country was at war, and it was so made known expressly to guide my conduct. I had learned with certainty from the Secretary of the Navy that the President's plan of war included the taking possession of California, and under his confidential instructions I had my warrant. Mr. Gillespie was directed to act in concert with me."

This smacks of the reminiscences of George Bancroft. The latter, over thirty-five years after the incidents recorded, related a conversation he had had with Polk in which the newly elected President referred to the four principal objects of his administration, among which was the acquisition of California. Justin Smith's comment on the value of this is probably accurate.¹¹ Certainly Frémont strengthened his own memory by the use of information he secured from Bancroft when he wrote "The Conquest of California" for the *Century* of April, 1891 to which reference has been made.

Probably we shall not be far from the truth if we assert that Frémont fully intended to complete his surveys in the Northwest and then return to the States. Gillespie overtook him before that work was completed, and he re-

¹¹ Justin Smith, *The War with Mexico*, I, 127.

turned to California. Any information this officer brought regarding relations with Mexico could hardly escape a tantalizing vagueness. Leidesdorff's exclamation over the "glorious news" does not negative this view. There were rumors of war between the United States and Mexico in California and in the United States, and Larkin's letter to Gillespie, quoted in this chapter, does not add definiteness to the situation.

Frémont, then, could not have heard that his "country was at war," as his *Memoirs* claim. In the letters written to his wife on April 1 and to his father-in-law on May 24, he had expressed his intention of returning home, and we may accept this as his intention. Frémont's letter to Captain Montgomery, June 16, expresses this same intention, and the approximate date for his departure is given as July 1.¹²

How, then, did Frémont become involved in the Bear Flag revolt? The excitement among the hunters and settlers in the Sacramento Valley was a real and growing factor throughout the spring of 1846. Of this there can be no doubt. It has been estimated that two hundred men came to this section from the United States in 1845, and anyone who understands the average frontier community will appreciate the avidity with which it can seize and enlarge upon rumors. In such circumstances convictions are quickly formed, and action is invariably hasty.

We may be sure that Frémont's appearance did not tend to allay the rumors. The people knew he was an officer of the United States. They knew he had had trouble with the California authorities at Hawk's Peak

¹² In many cases writers have made the mistake of relying entirely on Frémont's *Memoirs* for information regarding his activity instead of seeking it from his writings contemporary with the events recorded.

a few weeks earlier. They knew he had withdrawn. They knew also that he had been overtaken by Gillespie, another officer of the United States, as he withdrew to Oregon, and that he had returned with Gillespie. Furthermore, they knew he had had a conflict with the Indians in northern California, and this confirmed rumors among the settlers to the effect that officials of California were inducing Indians to attack foreigners within the Mexican territory.

These things provoked excitement. The foreign element became more difficult to control. The Americans who had married into California families and who had served as a stabilizing influence during the early period of agitation found it increasingly difficult to hold their countrymen in check. Frémont's camp became the center of hopes and interest. From the valleys of the north and west and from the country to the south and the east came adventurers and settlers to learn the plans of the American officer.

The difficulty of this situation is emphasized further when we consider the character of the small force commanded by Frémont. They were not soldiers accustomed to rigid discipline under stress. To observe the regulations and rules of camp under normal conditions was easy enough, but they found themselves in the midst of surroundings which aroused a sympathetic response in their natures. Even Carson wanted to resign and join the settlers, a suggestion which led probably to some rather serious conferences between Frémont and this famous guide.

Against the urge of the settlers, against the sympathy of his own men for the settlers' cause, against his own secret wish to be revenged for the humiliation of Hawk's

Peak, against the whole situation which invited to action, were the instructions Gillespie had brought him, the gist of which was to conciliate the native population and win them over to the United States. To be sure these same instructions had twice suggested that the Californians would be welcomed by the United States if they declared their independence from Mexico and requested the republic to the east to take them over. And there was another condition that would permit American officials to interfere: if any foreign power attempted to take over California, action must be taken to prevent it.

Under such conditions Frémont may be commended for moving slowly. Indeed he could not very well do anything else. Evidently he was puzzled, and circumstances over which he had no control were drawing him into the controversy.

It was during this period that Frémont is supposed to have put forward his plan for the "neutral conquest of California" to Ide, a plan which was rejected, as already set forth. Probably Ide was more displeased with the idea of Frémont's running off after getting the affair started than he was with the actual scheme, for he turned the proposition down with some indignation, saying that "it would be a long time ere he would consent, or join with any set or company of irresponsible persons, who first commit an outrage and then dishonorably leave the country and others to settle this difficulty, or endure its consequence."¹³

According to Ide, Frémont excused the suggestion on

¹³ *Sketch*, pp. 114-115. According to William Hargrave, "California in 1846," MS in the Bancroft Collection, University of California Library, Frémont had to be pushed into the controversy. Kelsey, Swift, and Hargrave agitated vigorously and became "somewhat disgusted" with Frémont because of his hesitant mood.

the ground that Castro's action justified this means of meeting the situation. It is possible that Ide misunderstood Frémont's intention. It is also possible that Frémont made some kind of proposal which, upon second thought, he realized might become embarrassing. Certainly cowardice was not one of Frémont's characteristics.

Despite Ide's rejection of Frémont's idea, action was going forward in other quarters and first steps toward inciting the revolt were being taken, and in the events which followed Ide played an active part.

In its early stages the outbreak worked out as planned. The dozen men who took the horses from Captain Arce, Castro's officer, had nothing to lose by the act. They were typical frontier characters. Apparently they acted independently. At least Frémont was not directly responsible for what they did. There is good reason to believe that the action came from agitation on the part of the settlers, Kelsey and Swift sharing a good deal of the responsibility for it. While Frémont was still halting between possible lines of action, while he was making his suggestion to Ide—a suggestion in line with rumors he may well have heard already—the act which precipitated the Bear Flag revolt took place.

And again conditions lend credence to this point of view. The men who were influenced by the events had offered to join Frémont's forces with a view to hostile action, but Frémont had refused to enlist them and had resisted their suggestion to take a hostile attitude. Many of them may well have concluded that no immediate action could be expected from that quarter. This opinion would appear to be justified by the desire of some of his men to withdraw from the exploring expedition in order to participate in the attacks on California officials.

At any rate the events of June 10 led inevitably to the capture of Sonoma on June 14. The disorganized character of the group who participated in this incident is revealed by their ludicrous conduct following their arrival at Salvador Vallejo's home. That sedate official and his family were somewhat perturbed by the noise and clamor about the house on that particular Sunday morning, and this feeling was not allayed by what they saw from the window. The appearance of these American adventurers, many of whom "had nothing to lose," was anything but reassuring. It must have been pretty generally known that Vallejo was not opposed to having the United States annex California, and he had no way of learning that the men who visited him were not among those who shared such general knowledge. His wife pleaded with him to make his escape through the back door, but Vallejo wisely declined to do this. Instead he met his unwelcome guests at the front door, and extended to them genuine California hospitality.

What followed was a reflection on the leaders of the filibusters. Although Ezekiel Merritt was nominally the leader, it soon became evident that the adventurers that day in Sonoma had no recognized head. This aided in creating the impression, which Vallejo apparently shared, that Frémont was manipulating the whole affair.

At any rate, Merritt, Semple, and William Knight finally entered Vallejo's house as emissaries of the band. There was a long wait. The men outside grew impatient. They sent John Gregsby to investigate. Then followed another long and impatient wait.

Finally, Ide was chosen with specific orders to report back at once the cause of the delay. Incidentally, it reflects favorably upon the main body of men that they did

not enter the house *en masse* and investigate for themselves.

One glance explained the delays to Ide. Merritt sat with his chin on his breast, completely stupefied by drink. Knight, selected as interpreter, had lost all interest in interpreting, and Semple was struggling somewhat vaguely with articles of capitulation. Vallejo's free-flowing *aguardiente* had undone the first emissaries. Ide, however, was a prohibitionist who practiced what he preached and refusing Vallejo's potent hospitality he reported back to his men.

The first impulse was to arrest and then parole Vallejo and his companions, and papers providing for this were drawn up. But sentiments changed and the conquerors decided to send their prisoners to Frémont's camp.

The change was due probably to the delay in negotiations or to the determination of the men to retain control. At any rate the capitulations drawn up by the leaders were rejected, and the prisoners, accompanied by Jacob Leese, an American who had married into Vallejo's family and who had been called in as an interpreter, were sent under guard to Frémont's camp.

That officer did not greet them in the cordial manner Vallejo had expected. Indeed he denied responsibility for what had been done. Perhaps he did not feel unkindly toward the Californians, but had reached the conclusion that the angry sentiment among the settlers would not permit paroling the prisoners. Why Leese, the interpreter, should have been held has not been explained adequately, but it may have been due to the same cause. In the *New Helvetia Diary* under date of Tuesday, June 16, is the following:

Arrived E. Merritt and Carson from Frémont Camp, with

news of Sonoma being occupied by the Americans, arrived in the evening as prisoners, General Vallejo, Salvador Vallejo, Prudon and Leese.

Meanwhile Ide, with more than a score of followers, was occupied at Sonoma. Californians were arrested and imprisoned. A flag was prepared and raised, flaunting a crudely drawn animal supposed to be a bear in one corner and a star in another, with the words "California Republic" beneath. A laborious proclamation was issued. Todd was sent to Yerba Buena from Sonoma and Misroon came to Sonoma from Yerba Buena. The former attempted to secure powder from Captain Montgomery, but instead received a tactful letter to take back to Ide informing that commander that he could not, as an officer of the United States, give aid in any form regardless of any sympathy he might have in the dispute. Misroon reached Sonoma in answer to an appeal from Vallejo, who had requested Montgomery, as commander of the "Portsmouth," to intervene on behalf of the Californians. Misroon was directed to investigate conditions in Sonoma very quietly, and if he found the Americans had been inconsiderate he was to confer with Ide and urge that officer to adopt a more conciliatory policy.

During this period Ide sent two men, Cowie and Fowler, to the Fitch ranch on the Russian River for a keg of powder. The men were captured by a band of Californians and put to death. Many varied stories of mutilation of the bodies of the Americans by the Californians have been told, but nothing sufficiently trustworthy has been extracted from the confused narrative to justify its acceptance. Indeed, it is not important enough to attract one-tenth of the controversy it has provoked.

The final move in the Bear Flag revolt may be briefly

summarized here. The so-called "Battle of Olompali" resembled a battle as much as the "Boston Massacre" resembled a massacre. It was a brief skirmish following the arrival of the Americans at a place known as Camilo's Ranch, about midway between San Rafael and Petaluma. It resulted in the death of one or two Californians and in the capture of several horses by the Americans. While the Americans were contending with the Californians near San Rafael, Frémont was crossing the country to Sonoma from his camp on the American River.

Appeals had reached him from the former place, and at the same time he was informed that Castro was planning an attack on Sonoma. These things led him to decide upon a definite policy of co-operation with the Americans.

Frémont reached Sonoma with over a hundred men and went on to San Rafael to meet Castro's forces. In that vicinity some of his followers killed three Californians. He also captured men bearing messages which indicated that Castro intended to attack Sonoma. These were planted for the express purpose of drawing Frémont back, thereby giving the Californians plenty of time to cross to the south side of San Francisco Bay.

Immediately after his arrival at Sonoma, Frémont was convinced that he had been duped, and returned at once to San Rafael. Meanwhile the Californians commanded a launch at Sausalito and crossed to the south side of the Bay. Frémont and his men returned to Sonoma, arriving just in time to celebrate the Fourth of July.

There followed a reorganization in which Frémont was placed in command. A few days later this independent action was merged into the Mexican War. The United States flag was raised at Sonoma on July 9, and two days later it was hoisted at Sutter's Fort.

VII. THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

The interest of the people of the United States in California began in the late eighteenth and in the early nineteenth centuries. This interest went back to the dawn period when Boston sloops, freighted with New England merchandise, nosed their way through Pacific fogs, and New Bedford whalers hurled harpoons off the Monterey coast. It was extended by the hide-and-tallow trade carried on between sharp-featured Yankee skippers and soft-voiced natives from the rancheros, and it was strengthened by innocuous bartering in unfrequented coves where sandal-footed friars from a neighboring mission made exchanges with slimy-coated sailors from around the Horn. It became a more permanent thing with the increase in the number of deserters who left their ships to settle among the natives, and it was encouraged by the appearance of the trapper from beyond the Sierra. It waxed stronger with each episode that multiplied the contacts between the two coasts and grew in arrogance and intolerance with each passing decade.

Meanwhile the natives of California were gradually losing their respect for officials who resided in Mexico City. Even prior to 1821, while Spain struggled feebly to administer laws and to regulate trade in that remote part of her imperial domain, Spanish officials in California found it advantageous to deal leniently with the increasing number of American traders who anchored in the principal harbors or who stole quietly into the sheltered coves. And the reason for this unofficial behavior is easily explained. The local officers coveted the good will of the people among whom they lived more than they

feared the displeasure of their superiors who resided in Mexico City.

Immediately following the independence of Mexico the official attitude of the central government was modified. The Yankee was welcomed to California, and American trade was carried on openly. When later the Mexican officials observed the growing prominence of the United States influence and attempted to check it along the Pacific Coast, they found that it had already fixed itself in the life of the people. It could not be eradicated by legislation and its further introduction could not be prevented by local officers.

So the time came for a change in California's allegiance. Sentiment in that province demanded it; public opinion in the United States advocated it; Mexican loyalty was too divided to prevent it; the policy of foreign nations was not formulated definitely enough to influence it. The change was inevitable—manifest destiny. And as Frémont found himself surrounded by the most determined sentiment connected with the transition, it was but natural that he should become a participant. But there was a price to pay. Frémont did not realize it at the time. In the winter of his days as he sat writing reminiscences in his *Memoirs* he was sure his decision to take part in those stirring events had marked a definite turning-point in his career. The golden days of gypsy freedom were over, and what a halo his memory drew around those earlier years! His had been a life of unrestraint in the open air, and he had found joy in the sheer gladness of living.

His principal obstacles had been such as the seasons created—the snow- and ice-covered mountains of winter, the burning and inhospitable plains of summer, and the sterile and mirage-infested deserts of all seasons. These

presented obstacles, but one learned how to overcome them. There was no treachery behind the majesty of the mountain nor in the inhospitable plain. But now came the change. In the future his life was to lead out from the pure and wholesome air of nature "into the poisoned atmosphere and jarring circumstances of conflict among men, made subtle and malignant by clashing interests."

The days of his exploration as a topographical engineer under the United States ended in California at this time. The burdens of later explorations were to be heavier, and perhaps the personal economic responsibility helped to separate in his memory the later from the earlier experiences in this field. But there is an element of pathos in his recollection, and perhaps an unconscious regret. By training and inclination he was suited for the tasks of his topographical explorations. In temper and native qualities he was not suited to the more complex and intricate contacts required by the military and political life of his time. Too much restraint over long periods was required. The discipline to which he had accustomed himself did not give adequate training for the new and more complex responsibilities.

After all, it is difficult to say how much the uprising in the Sacramento Valley and the conquest of Sonoma by Americans had to do with the occupation of California by the United States. Credit for that incident belongs largely to the Navy. The administration had clearly determined beforehand that initiative in this movement should be taken by that department.

It will be recalled that Texas was admitted into the Union in 1845 and that Mexico had asserted her intention of severing diplomatic relations in the event of such admission by the United States government. The tense

situation growing out of this incident provided the background for the "secret and confidential" order sent by George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, to Commodore Sloat, dated June 24, 1845.

Your attention is still particularly directed to the present aspect of the relations between this country and Mexico. It is the earnest desire of the President to preserve the policy of peace; and he is anxious that you and every part of your squadron should be assiduously careful to avoid any act of aggression.

Should Mexico, however, be resolutely bent on hostilities, you will be mindful to protect the persons and interests of citizens of the United States near your station; and should you ascertain beyond a doubt that the Mexican government has declared war against us, you will at once employ the force under your command to the best advantage. The Mexican posts on the Pacific are said to be open and defenceless. If you ascertain with certainty that Mexico has declared war against the United States, you will at once possess yourself of the post of San Francisco and blockade or occupy such other posts as your force may permit.¹

Subsequent communications of August 5 and October 17 might well have been interpreted to mean that the department expected him to act if he heard that hostilities had commenced between the two countries. Bancroft's dispatch of May 13, 1846, did not reach Sloat before he turned over the command to Stockton. This would have informed him that war had begun and might have spurred him to move promptly to protect American interests in the Pacific. Such a report did reach him while he was at Mazatlan on May 17, 1846, but it was not official, and Sloat contented himself with dispatching a single vessel, the "Cyane," commanded by Captain Mervin, to the California coast. The "Portsmouth," under the com-

¹ *House Executive Document No. 19, 29th Congress, Second Session; J. M. Cutts, The Conquest of California, Appendix No. 6.*

mand of Captain Montgomery, had been sent earlier, at the request of Larkin, following Frémont's experience at Hawk's Peak.

A short time after the "Cyane" had sailed, Sloat received additional information confirming the earlier report. He quietly drew anchor and turned his vessels toward Monterey, arriving there on July 2. But he was still uncertain. Some of the responsibility for the hesitant attitude taken by the naval commander may have been due to Larkin. Sloat had his orders; he had learned of fighting on the Rio Grande; he believed that there was real danger that the British fleet might seize the ports of California unless he acted quickly. These were calls to action. On the other hand, there was the ever-present dread of making the mistake Jones had made in 1842—the mistake of acting prematurely—and there was Larkin's suggestion for delay. An end was put to this vacillating policy when news came of the conquest of Sonoma. On the morning of July 7 Sloat landed a force and raised the United States flag over the Custom House at Monterey. His proclamation was read announcing the existence of war between the United States and Mexico and asserting his intention of taking possession of California immediately. The province was to remain in the permanent possession of the United States and the inhabitants were to consider him as their friend. Those who objected to American control would be given adequate time to adjust their affairs and leave the country.

On the whole, the proclamation was in harmony with the conciliatory directions sent out from Washington. The night before, he dispatched a letter to Montgomery informing that officer of his intentions and ordering him to raise the flag at Yerba Buena. On the ninth it was

raised at both Yerba Buena² and Sonoma. Two days later it was hoisted over Sutter's Fort.

Meanwhile Frémont had returned from Sonoma to his camp on the American River. News of Sloat's proclamation had been received at the camp with the arrival of the flag. The naval commander had expressed a desire for a conference with Frémont, and about July 12 the latter moved south with approximately one hundred and sixty men. The route was down the Sacramento and up the San Joaquin. He crossed the latter stream near Hill's Ferry, thence, crossing the mountains, probably through Pacheco Pass, he came to San Juan on July 17. On the same day he was joined by forces sent out by Sloat. More than four months earlier he had stood on a peak in the vicinity of the village, and, through his glasses, had watched the Californians under Castro preparing to drive him from the country. Now, in their very midst, he raised the same flag, but with an entirely different purpose. Formerly it had been a sort of appeal for protection—his own flag raised in a foreign country as a warning to the Californians that in attacking him they might expect ultimately to have to reckon with his government. Now the flag was raised to indicate that his government had extended its authority over the country. It was with a certain grim satisfaction that he participated in the flag-day ceremonies at San Juan on this Friday, July 17, 1846.

Two days later Frémont was riding at the head of his motley force along the streets of Monterey. Passing through the town he established camp among pines and firs on a plot near the top of a ridge fronting the bay. A "delightful spot" he called it. The town, with its red-

² The name Yerba Buena was changed to San Francisco, January, 1847.

tilled roofs and inclosed gardens, surrounded with adobe walls capped with red tiles, lay in front of him to his right, and toward the left, beyond the ships inclosed in the bay, stretched the quiet waters of the Pacific.

The camp at once became a place of general interest. The officers and men from the British man-of-war, "Collingwood," and from the American squadron were frequent visitors. The expert marksmanship of the Delaware Indians was a revelation to some of these; and the other members of the party, with their peculiar dress, spare forms, dark skins, and black beards, through which flashed white teeth with each passing smile, attracted the attention of all who saw them.

They "are the most daring and hardy set of fellows I ever looked upon" was the opinion of a frontiersman expressed in a letter of the period. "They are splendid marksmen and can plant a bullet in the enemy's head with their horses at full gallop. They never think of eating bread but live upon meat all the time. They never sleep in a house but upon the ground, with a blanket around them, their saddle for a pillow and rifle by their side."³

But Frémont had come for a conference with Commodore Sloat, and as soon as he could he visited that official on board the "Savannah." The conference did not have a happy ending. Sloat had expected to see written authority from Washington for Frémont's action in the north. When Frémont informed him that he had had no official authority for his action—that he had gone absolutely on his own responsibility—the Commodore "was much disturbed." The interview ended abruptly, and Frémont did not feel inclined to seek another.

³ *Niles's Register*, LXXI-LXXII (1846-1847), 160.

As he looked back upon this conversation nearly fifty years later his memory probably added to it some minor details. This is easily done when one becomes reminiscent. Upon returning to the shore he strolled out toward the point of pines jutting into the sea, and here began to reflect on the events just past. He felt the

die was cast, and as trifles float into a mind at ease I pleased myself with thinking it a good augury that, as Savannah was my birthplace, the birth of this new child of our country should have been presided over by this "Savannah" of the sea.

Looking out over the bay, the dark hulls of the war-vessels and the lumbering cannon still looked ominous and threatening. But the cross of St. George hung idly down from the peak of the great ship "Collingwood," the breeze occasionally spreading out against the sky the small red patch which represented centuries of glory. There lay the pieces on the great chess-board before me with which the game for an empire had been played. At its close we had, to be sure, four pieces to one, but that was a queen. I was but a pawn, and like a pawn I had been pushed forward to the front at the opening of the game.

Doubtless the last statement was literally true. He had been "pushed forward" against his will, and now found himself embarrassed by being credited with leadership in the movement which he did not deserve. And so, as he sat there beside the sea, at peace with the world, "dreams which had become realities" gathered about him.

Both Sloat and Frémont were disappointed by their conference. A new official, Commodore Stockton, had arrived in the "Congress" on July 15, and reported to Sloat for duty. He was bombastically aggressive, and had little patience with the vacillating policy of Sloat. To him Frémont went, accompanied by Gillespie; but here the conference at first was equally discouraging. Frémont was about to terminate the interview with the remark that

he would decide during the night whether to return to the United States or remain in the territory when Stockton confided to him that before long he would be in command of the United States forces and that he desired to have Frémont remain. Within a few days Sloat turned over the command to Stockton and returned home.

The egregious braggart who was left in charge of the American forces at Monterey was not the man to make a microscopic examination of orders with a view to learning what specific things he was permitted to do. His proclamation of July 29 is a striking illustration of utter tactlessness and incorrigible conceit. It affords indubitable proof of the writer's indiscretion. It was enough to cause resentment among any self-respecting people, and was, of course, a direct violation of orders sent from Washington to govern the relations of United States officials toward the natives of California.

But Frémont and Gillespie placed themselves under Stockton's command and on July 26 the battalion, with its leaders, embarked on the "Cyane." A sea voyage to San Diego had been anticipated with considerable pleasure by the party, but, as Frémont wrote, the pleasure proved to be in the anticipation. "We had been but a few hours at sea when we were all very low in our minds." Carson was among those most completely subdued by the roll of the boat. But the despondency created by their maritime experiences was quickly forgotten when, three days later, they entered the quiet waters of San Diego Bay.

Here Frémont found evidence of a friendly feeling for the United States, and from the members of Juan Bandini's family he received testimony of personal esteem and good will. They presented him with "an uncommonly beautiful sorrel horse, thoroughly trained" and "accus-

tomed to take a cup of coffee and eat sugar." It was a gift greatly appreciated by the young officer.

Frémont had come to San Diego to cut off the retreat of Castro. A few days after he landed, Stockton disembarked his forces at San Pedro for a land attack on Los Angeles. He intended to regulate his movements so that Frémont could come north from San Diego and meet him in Los Angeles. The newly appointed major—Stockton had made the appointment—found no opposition at San Diego, but the people of the neighborhood, despite the outward appearance of friendly feeling, inconvenienced the Americans as much as possible. It took Frémont a week or more to secure the requisite number of horses for his northward move. This he finally accomplished, and on August 8 his battalion of about one hundred and twenty men left San Diego for Los Angeles.

These forces, with the three hundred and sixty men landed at San Pedro by Stockton, gave the Americans an overwhelming advantage. General Castro had in the California army at that time about one hundred discontented men, practically unarmed. Resistance was abandoned by both Castro and Andrés Pico. An attempt was made to come to terms with Stockton, but that official was not in a conciliatory frame of mind. After adjourning the legislative assembly, then in session in Los Angeles, the two Spanish officials sought safety in retreat—Castro in Sonora, and Pico first on his ranch near San Bernardino and later in Lower California.

The American leaders united their forces in Los Angeles on August 13. The United States flag was raised without opposition, and the leading citizens pledged their allegiance. On the seventeenth Stockton proclaimed California a territory of the United States. This second

proclamation is a more commendable—or perhaps one should say a less objectionable—document than the first. Provision was made for civil government, allowing considerable authority to the people for local organization. Stockton made out a report of these accomplishments for the government at Washington, and Kit Carson was sent overland in charge of this and other documents.

On September 2, 1846, a general order was issued creating an office of military commandant of the territory, dividing it into three departments, and Frémont was appointed to take charge. Gillespie was left in command of the southern department with instructions to maintain martial law. Stockton then left Los Angeles for San Pedro and on September 5 he sailed for the north. At about the same time Major Frémont conducted the rest of his battalion overland to the Sacramento Valley. This is usually given as the end of the first conquest, or the first phase of the conquest of California. As a matter of fact military operations had hardly begun.

The responsibility for the outbreak in Los Angeles following the withdrawal of Stockton and Frémont was due primarily to the stupidity of American officers, particularly to Stockton and Gillespie. Had these men observed instructions of the administration at Washington and exerted themselves to conciliate the Californians, lives would have been spared and trouble avoided.

Gillespie, evidently, was not as tactful in military affairs as he was in diplomatic ones, and from Stockton he seems to have contracted the habit of domineering. The free and easy life to which the Californians were accustomed did not adapt itself readily to a military régime.

An outbreak occurred in the early morning of September 23, and within a short time Gillespie found himself

surrounded by a force of several hundred. The leaders were former officers of Castro's and all had given their parole not to take up arms against the United States. In spite of this, the movement was enthusiastically supported by the people and was accompanied with a success that greatly surprised the American forces. Gillespie was completely surrounded and all supplies were cut off. The nearest source of help was at Monterey, and to reach there it was necessary, of course, to pass through the enemies' lines. The man chosen for this dangerous task was a John Brown, known as Juan Flaco or Lean John.

The hazardous attempt was begun on the evening of September 24. Before the start, Gillespie wrote his message on cigarette papers. These were then carefully worked into Lean John's hair, where they found a secure hiding-place. Knowing that any armed man would be an object of immediate suspicion, the courier rode off on his gambler's chance, unarmed. Unobtrusively, he passed through the enemy lines without being stopped and started on his long journey. He was later detected by a small band of natives, however, and was forced to ride for his life. Without any weapons he presented an unresisting target for his pursuers. Bullets whizzed about him, but he was not hit. His horse was the victim. The animal received a mortal wound just when the chase was at its hottest, but it kept gamely on.

A thirteen-foot ravine loomed ahead and Lean John headed his wounded horse directly for the brink. A spectacular jump carried them to the opposite side and enabled Gillespie's messenger to elude his pursuers. A little later, the horse which had saved him died and Lean John set out on foot for a ranch, twenty-seven miles distant, where he secured another. With this animal he reached Santa

Barbara. Fresh horses were obtained there and he rode through to Monterey, arriving on the evening of the twenty-ninth. So far he had made the journey without rest. After a three-hour nap at Monterey he rode to San Francisco, arriving on the evening of the thirtieth, or early on October first.⁴ He had covered a distance of five hundred miles in less than five days of actual riding time. It was an accomplishment, when all the difficulties are taken into consideration, surpassing Frémont's famous ride.

Immediately upon receiving the message Stockton took steps to relieve Gillespie. Captain Mervine was dispatched in the "Savannah" with three hundred and fifty men, but on account of heavy fogs he did not reach San Pedro until October 7. Meanwhile Gillespie had surrendered. The terms were generous enough. He was permitted to withdraw to San Pedro without surrendering his flags or weapons, with the understanding that he would immediately embark upon a merchant vessel in the harbor. Having spiked his cannon or thrown them into the bay, he boarded the vessel and waited. Mervine arrived on the seventh.

The next morning the troops landed and marched toward Los Angeles. The Californians were prepared for such a move and began a long-distance attack. They had every advantage because they were well mounted and had a small cannon, while the Americans were on foot. The latter were compelled to abandon the attack on Los Angeles and return to San Pedro.

Meanwhile Frémont had started down by boat from the north. Before reaching San Pedro he learned of the difficulty he would have in procuring horses there and

⁴ Robert G. Cleland, *A History of California: The American Period*, pp. 212-213.

turned back to Monterey. Here we may leave him to make preparations for an overland march while we notice briefly an American invasion from another direction.

Among the plans made by the War Department for prosecuting the war against Mexico was one which provided for an overland expedition against New Mexico and California. It was placed under the command of General Stephen W. Kearny. Toward the end of June, 1846, this force—Army of the West, it was called—left Fort Leavenworth and marched on Santa Fe. Its occupation of this place was effected without difficulty, and, leaving a garrison, Kearny set out toward the end of September for the Pacific Coast. He followed the Gila River route. Near Socorro he met Kit Carson with messages sent out by Stockton. These contained an account of the conquest and civil organization of California which Stockton had prepared for the information of the authorities at Washington. Carson informed Kearny that the country had been occupied, that American rule had been established, and that the natives had accepted the change in good faith. This induced Kearny to send two-thirds of his force back to Santa Fe and to proceed to California with a hundred men. Carson's messages were turned over to his associate on the second Frémont expedition, Thomas Fitzpatrick, a scout whose reputation equaled that of Carson, to be taken to Washington. Carson was ordered to return with Kearny to California. Fitzpatrick had not been over the route by which Kearny was entering California, and, by securing Carson as a guide, the troops might be expected to make the journey with less difficulty. When Kearny reached the Colorado he intercepted dispatches which gave him information regarding the revolt against Gillespie, but it was lacking in detail.

The trip across the desert was accompanied by great privation, and many of the animals died of thirst. On December 2 the exhausted band came to a halt at a place known as Warner's Ranch. Three days later reinforcements sent by Stockton, who had taken command of the forces in the south, reached Kearny, and on the following day the battle of San Pascual, the most severe battle of the struggle in California, took place. At the end of about half an hour the Californians withdrew. Nearly two-score Americans were killed or wounded in the fighting. Kearny himself was wounded. Further reinforcements were sent to Kearny before that official finally entered San Diego on December 12. Here began the quarrel between Stockton and Kearny over rank, a dispute which was later to involve Frémont and which led to his arrest and trial by court-martial. A compromise arrangement was made temporarily and it was decided that the combined forces should move north from San Diego to aid Frémont in an attack on Los Angeles.

With about six hundred men they left San Diego on December 29. The Californians made some feeble attempts to check them, particularly at the San Gabriel and the Los Angeles rivers, but in neither place did they do much damage. The Americans entered the city during the early morning of January 10 and received its surrender. Gillespie raised the flag which he had been forced to lower four months earlier, and the California struggle came to an end.

Meanwhile Frémont was raising troops at Monterey, and there he learned of his appointment as Lieutenant-Colonel of a rifle regiment in the Army. From Monterey he moved south, halting at the Mission San Juan Bautista long enough to search the country for his old adversary,

Manuel Castro, and his California troops. But these successfully eluded him. His stay at the mission was prolonged until the end of November in expectation of reinforcements from the Sacramento Valley, and then, with about four hundred and thirty men, he continued south to join in the recovery of Los Angeles.

The California Battalion, as Frémont's force was called, experienced considerable hardship on its overland march. The wretched weather conditions, together with the difficulty of getting food, tested the courage of the men and reflected favorably upon Frémont's leadership. His ability to meet trying emergencies of this sort won him the respect of his comrades and of many of the settlers. William Hargrave said that the men north of San Francisco did not "feel fondly" toward Frémont when they first met him, "but when we came to be in daily intercourse with him in trying situations this feeling gradually wore off." And as that feeling wore off it was replaced with one of respect. But Frémont was not the man to gain the deep affection of large numbers of his fellow-men.

Near San Luis Obispo occurred an incident which proved to be a stroke of good fortune. Pico, who with other leading Californians had broken his parole, was captured and sentenced to be shot. The matter of breaking a parole was not taken as seriously by the Spaniards as by the Americans, and this was given due consideration by Frémont when petitioned for clemency—this and the prayerful solicitations of Pico's wife, together with the needs of their family of fourteen children. Frémont's pardon of Pico won the faithful devotion of Don Jesús, and provided Frémont with an influential Spaniard as an intermediary later. For Pico remained closely associated with Frémont and used his influence with his cousin,

Andrés Pico, commander of the California troops, to conclude an amicable peace.

On Christmas Day, 1846, while at Santa Barbara, an elderly woman, Señora Bernarda Ruiz, called on Frémont to discuss peace—a “peace acceptable and enduring.” To provide for such a settlement, he agreed, should be the aim of the victors, and the Colonel promised to remember her advice when negotiations should begin. In turn she agreed to use her influence among her own people on behalf of any proposals which promised an amicable and lasting adjustment. “Here,” he later wrote, “began the capitulation of Cahuenga.”

On the night of January 5, 1847, the battalion camped at the mission of San Buenaventura, about which hovered some of the enemy. A message from Stockton was received on the ninth, and two days later messengers brought word of the re-occupation of Los Angeles by the United States troops. Frémont had reached the mission of San Fernando, and from there he got in touch with Andrés Pico through the cousin who was now with the Americans. On January 12, 1847, at the old Cahuenga ranch house, the place to which Frémont had moved his headquarters, articles of capitulation were drawn up and signed. The treaty was in complete accord with the conciliatory policy the President had determined upon from the beginning, and the acceptance of its generous provisions for the California troops definitely ended that phase of the Mexican War carried on in this territory. While Stockton approved, apparently, the treaty did not have his whole-hearted support.

The conclusion of military operations had come as a climax to a movement which could have terminated in no other way. In its progress it had followed rather slowly

the description given by Lucas Ignacio Alemán, Secretary of Foreign Affairs under Bustamante, when, in 1829, he presented to the Cabinet what he believed to be the usual procedure of the United States in its program of expansion.⁵ His paper was prepared apropos of conditions in Texas, but it was equally pertinent to the growth of American interests in California. A sketch of this expansion process is in place here.

In the earliest period, citizens from the United States had established themselves in the Pacific Coast province without attracting the attention of Spanish officials. As the policy of the government under Spain and Mexico wavered between rigid regulations to prevent immigration and a lazy indifference toward the enforcement of law, intruders displayed an uncanny agility in appearing to comply with requirements or in persuading the local official to wink at the statute. The appearance of other explorers from east of the mountains kept alive the advance American's attachment for his native land and encouraged him to assume a more aggressive attitude. He began to play a part in formulating local policies and in settling local disputes. He was sometimes responsible for initiating movements which curiously complicated conditions in his adopted country. His facility at starting border-line controversies became so ingenious that the puzzled officials frequently gave up in despair.

Meanwhile he received encouragement from the accumulation of interest at Washington. That government had begun with halting proposals to purchase but had ultimately found itself in possession of a list of grievances (although Alemán would not admit this) which

⁵ A translation of Alemán's report may be found in *House Document No. 351*, 25th Congress, Second Session, pp. 312-322.

justified it in demanding a settlement, either through arbitration or through purchase. Local discontent and national demands thus combined to provoke an uprising which resulted in completely overthrowing the weaker power.

The outcome was due to the efforts of no single individual. To attribute the conquest of California to Frémont⁶ is as absurd as it would be to credit Stockton or Sloat or Kearny with the achievement. Perhaps the last deserves more credit than the first. Frémont was exactly what he later admitted himself to be, a pawn put forward by others, by that border-line group usually designated as agitators or propagandists. During those restless days which preceded the settlers' uprising he did not display any of the qualities of the conqueror. Even second-rate leadership must be denied him. And surely, if he were in possession of those mysterious messages which he later pretended were gained from conversations with Gillespie and which were embodied in certain vague passages of his family letters, he would have been justified in assuming the indubitable position of leader. He not only failed to act with vigor under orders which he claimed to have; he also failed to obey orders which we are practically certain he possessed. He did not agitate and he did not conciliate. A real leader would have found ways of dominating the situation from the beginning. Frémont was one of the creatures of a movement, and remained such until forced by circumstances into a position of leadership.

⁶ An interesting apportionment of credit in the conquest of California, as far as Stockton, Frémont, and Kearny are involved, may be found in Valentine Mott Porter's "General Stephen W. Kearny and the Conquest of California (1846-1847)" in *Publications of the Historical Society of Southern California*, VIII, 95-127.

VIII. A QUARREL AND A COURT-MARTIAL

Hesitation disappeared from Frémont's conduct after he decided to join Commodore Stockton instead of returning home, but misfortunes followed his decision and he found himself in that "poisoned atmosphere . . . made subtle and malignant by clashing interests." When he aligned himself with Stockton, during that officer's clash with General Kearny, he took a stand which ultimately brought upon him court-martial and conviction on three charges covering twenty-three specifications.

To Stockton, who was perhaps more culpable than either of the others, there came no evil effects. He was the least attractive of the three characters and his conduct during the time he was in command did not reveal personal qualities comparable to those exhibited by his colleagues.

To Frémont his decision brought heartache, and left him with a hatred more violent than any other he experienced throughout his life. Indeed, if we may accept contemporary reports, his passion became inexcusably bitter and his vindictiveness assumed the violence of a frontier feud.

To Kearny it brought embarrassment, it severed the pleasant relationship he had maintained with Frémont and the Bentons, it gave a verdict from a court recognizing the justice of the position he had taken in the controversy, and it aroused a public sentiment which was depressing to a man of his temperament.

The dispute between Frémont and Kearny had its inception in the controversy carried on by Kearny and

Stockton upon the arrival of the former at San Diego in December 1846. The two quarrels were merged into each other so completely that it is necessary to give some space to the latter in order to comprehend the former.

The subject of dispute between General Kearny and Commodore Stockton was the general control of military and civil affairs in California. Stockton was the successor of Commodore Sloat and acted under government orders sent from Washington to that official. The object of the various orders sent to Sloat in 1845 was to have the Pacific squadron take possession of the ports of California as quickly as possible following the beginning of hostilities between the United States and Mexico. The second step required Commodore Sloat to avoid any act that might arouse the hostility of the Californians. More than that, he was to exert himself to win them over to the American cause. Considerable liberty of action was permitted, but these two demands were positive.

Under these orders Commodore Stockton occupied the ports and proceeded with the conquest and organization of government in California. The fact that there was little, if any, attempt at conciliation indicates that Stockton was more interested in a conquest by force than through following the orders of the government. He was better at interpreting the liberal clauses in the orders to meet his needs than he was at following the more specific directions given. Subsequent orders,¹ issued in July 1846, to Commodore Sloat would have given some basis for Stockton's attitude toward Kearny had he known of them, but of these Stockton was ignorant at the time of the controversy.

¹ Bancroft to Sloat, July 12, 1846, quoted in Frémont's *Court Martial, Senate Executive Document No. 32*, 30th Congress, First Session, pp. 59-60.

And even these orders contained a sentence which would have informed any fair-minded official that the government at Washington intended to have the commander of land forces take precedence over the naval officer in the organization following occupation. "In the absence of a military officer higher than captain, the selection of the first American post or posts on the waters of the Pacific, in California, is left to your discretion." Kearny had just been appointed brevet brigadier-general in the Army.

General Kearny's orders were dated June 3, 1846, and gave him large discretionary powers in connection with all phases of the task assigned him.² The naval forces of the United States would be in the Pacific and probably in possession of the towns along the coast. This force would co-operate with him in the conquest.

"Should you conquer and take possession of New Mexico and Upper California, or considerable places in either, you will establish temporary civil government therein" And farther on occurs a sentence which is found in so many of the instructions sent to the Pacific Coast during this period: "In your whole conduct you will act in such a manner as best to conciliate the inhabitants, and render them friendly to the United States." Further orders from the War Department indicated that Kearny was to take command of additional forces as they came to California.

Following the disastrous engagement at San Pascual, Kearny joined Stockton at San Diego in December 1846. Mutual comic offers to surrender leadership ended by leaving Stockton in charge. Indeed, Kearny's wound and his small force of less than a hundred men made it

² *California Message and Correspondence*, 1850, pp. 236-239.

unwise for him to attempt to exercise his authority at that time. As long as conditions remained unsettled he declined to assert his just claims. When the military struggle was over and Stockton began to organize a civil government, the General urged his right to direct affairs. He had gone more than halfway in his efforts to work harmoniously with the commander of the Navy, but the latter insisted on completely dominating the situation. On January 16, 1847, Kearny demanded a "show-down" by addressing a written communication to Stockton as follows:

I am informed that you are now engaged in organizing a civil government and appointing officers for it in this territory. As this duty has been assigned specially to myself by orders of the President, . . . I have to ask if you have any authority . . . to form such a government and make such appointments? If you have . . . and will show it to me, or will furnish me with certified copies of it, I will cheerfully acquiesce in what you are doing. If you have not . . . , I demand that you cease all further proceedings relating to the formation of a civil government for this territory, as I cannot recognize in you any right in assuming to perform duties confided to me by the President.³

Stockton refused to comply with these demands, informed Kearny that he would request the President to recall him (Kearny), and ordered the General to consider himself suspended from the command of the United States troops in that place while awaiting an answer. To support his orders Stockton had a much stronger force.

Kearny carried the dispute one step farther and thereby brought Frémont into the quarrel, although the communication may have been written before the quoted letter was sent to Stockton. He ordered Frémont to make no change

³ John Bigelow, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Frémont*, 1856, pp. 194-195.

in the organization of his battalion, or in the officers commanding it, without directions from himself. It seems that Gillespie was about to succeed Frémont as commander of the troops and the latter was to assume the governorship.

Frémont informed Stockton of this order, and the next morning, January 17, wrote a courteous reply to Kearny. In this he said that he had found Commodore Stockton exercising the functions of military commander and civil governor as early as the preceding July and from him had received the military commission which he still held. He had observed that Kearny had formerly recognized Stockton as the commanding officer. He therefore felt

with great deference to your professional and personal character, constrained to say that until you and Commodore Stockton adjust between yourselves the question of rank, where I think the difficulty belongs, I shall have to report and receive orders as heretofore from the Commodore.

In the face of this opposition Kearny was helpless and admitted it frankly. In order to prevent a "collision" and a possible "civil war" he decided to "remain silent for the present, leaving with you [Stockton] the great responsibility of doing that for which you have no authority, and preventing me from complying with the President's orders." He informed the President and the Secretary of War of the attitude of Stockton and Frémont. Kearny then withdrew with his dragoons from Los Angeles to San Diego. Here his forces were soon strengthened by the arrival of about three hundred Mormon volunteers. The troops were stationed at San Luis Rey under Cooke to await developments, and Kearny sailed north to Monterey.

When Kearny reached San Francisco about the middle

of February 1847, he found welcome information confirming his stand in the controversy. Confidential communications had arrived from Washington for both Kearny and Stockton, informing them that the President deemed it "best for the public interest to invest the military officer commanding with the direction of operations on land and with the administrative functions of government over the people of the territory." This was ample confirmation and must have given Kearny a great deal of satisfaction.

The arrival of Commodore Shubrick at this time added strength to Kearny's position. That official was in sympathy with the General's point of view, and was ready to co-operate with him. As Shubrick was to succeed Stockton in command of the Pacific fleet he was in a position to assert his authority with assurance of recognition. And the arrival of a company of New York volunteers under the command of Colonel Stevenson, at about this time, strengthened the General's position still further.

Thus fortified, Kearny began to take the aggressive. The orders he sent south about March 1 were characterized by that crisp emphasis we associate with the military régime. Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont was to muster the California Battalion into service at once and report at San Francisco; Gillespie was relieved of his command in order to report to his chief in Washington; Cooke was made commander in the south; and all were required to act toward the natives in a conciliatory fashion. Had this policy been in practice from the beginning, Kearny said in his report to the administration a little later, there would have been little or no resistance in the territory. The natives had been treated most cruelly and shamefully by the Americans, and it was to their credit that they had resisted.

Frémont's response to these orders was not as prompt as the character of the command required. A reluctant promise to obey was given about March 12, but his exercise of authority during the next few days indicated a change of heart. Indeed, there is something of defiance in his conduct, and he paraded himself through the pages of correspondence as governor of California. Instructions were given to Owens, who was acting as commander of the battalion, to decline to obey any orders he might receive from other sources. As governor he drew bills of exchange against the United States government to the extent of several thousand dollars. All of this was attempted in the face of specific orders to bring all public documents in his possession to Monterey as soon as possible and to deliver them in person into the hands of his superior officer.

Prompt obedience at this point would have done a great deal to give Frémont favorable consideration in the mind of posterity. He must have been in receipt of Shubrick's letter, written to him during the last of January, and, regardless of its contents, he must have known that Kearny's orders came following a conference between that official and the Commodore. This, with the character of the General's messages, should have caused him to pause. Explanations for his conduct made later at the court-martial are not quite satisfactory; neither is the tardy and reluctant—one might almost say sullen—obedience which he finally rendered.

About this time Frémont made his "famous" ride. This was from Los Angeles to Monterey and return, a distance of over eight hundred miles, in approximately eight and one-half days. There were three in the party—Frémont, Jesus Pico, and Jacob Dodson—and if any one of the

three deserved more credit than the others it was the negro, Dodson, whose skill with the lasso kept the men provided with fresh horses.

But one should not make the mistake of thinking Frémont was impelled by a sudden desire to comply with General Kearny's orders. Nor does the explanation he made later at the court-martial—his desire to give warning or information of the sudden uprising of the people during those March days—appear quite satisfactory. Had he been as eager to impart this information in March, 1847, as he thought in 1848 during the trial that he had been, we may be sure he would have found some way of doing it. In this, as in many other instances, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine his motives.

It is not so difficult to learn what happened. He gained an interview with Kearny and, whatever the substance of their conversation may have been, it brought disappointment to Frémont and a promise to obey the orders he had received before leaving Los Angeles. Meanwhile he had offered his resignation and had had it rejected. Following the interview Frémont returned to Los Angeles, completing the ride referred to above.

A few days later Kearny ordered Mason to proceed to the southern military district and inspect the troops in that quarter. He was clothed with full authority to give orders and instructions upon any subject, civil or military in character, which he might think conducive to public interest. Mason brought directions to Frémont ordering the latter to clear up all outstanding demands incurred by his administration against the government, and prepare them for the decision of the disbursing officer immediately. This was declared to be the more urgent because it might be necessary for Frémont to proceed to Washing-

ton soon after his return to Monterey. He was to "re-embark" the volunteers at San Pedro and twelve days later report to Kearny at Monterey.

Mason reached Los Angeles at the end of the first week in April, eight or nine days behind Frémont. That official had completely recovered from the effects of his ride and was quartered comfortably in the home of Alexander Bell, which was the largest house in the town. Here he maintained considerable *éclat*, according to the report of his neighbors, and kept a sentry on duty most of the time; and here Mason's orderly came to summon him to an interview and was refused admission by the sentry on guard. A second time the orderly appeared and was again turned back without being able to deliver his summons. A third effort was equally futile ere Frémont came leisurely to Pryor's house where Mason had established his headquarters. By that time Mason was furious. Practically the entire morning had been occupied in attempts to open communication with this stiff-necked subordinate. A violent scene followed. Mason used very harsh terms and Frémont made an insolent reply. One bitter invective followed another until it looked as if the two would come to blows.

This stormy interview had been witnessed by Cooke, Pryor, and Foster. When the last two were alone Pryor told Foster why he believed Frémont had responded tardily to Mason's order. Early that morning, he said, he saw an old woman bring her daughter to Frémont's door. The latter received her and evidently gave orders to the sentry to admit no one until further notice. An hour later when Pryor passed Frémont's house the mother was still waiting and Mason's orderly had just made his first futile effort to deliver his summons. The errand of mother and

daughter may have been a legitimate one, but Pryor did not think so.⁴

Whatever may have been the immediate occasion for the breach between the two colonels, the very nature of their respective relations to hostile superiors was enough to provoke ill feeling. Frémont's pride had been rebuked by having to yield finally to Kearny, and to have to comply with the orders of Kearny's subordinate aggravated and humiliated him still further. Doubtless, too, Mason did not attempt to alleviate the situation in their personal interviews, although the letters exchanged on the twelfth and thirteenth of April, 1847, reveal nothing of the actual feeling existing between the two. Matters apparently reached a climax on the day following Frémont's letter of the thirteenth. The full details will probably never be known. A willingness to inflict humiliation upon one whose resentment was becoming intolerably sensitive to his position may have been responsible for the break. At any rate, it came when Mason suddenly blurted, "None of your insolence, or I will put you in irons." Frémont demanded an apology, which was refused. This was followed by a challenge, and Mason accepted, choosing double-barreled shotguns as weapons. It seems that Mason was an expert with this particular weapon and that Frémont was not familiar with it. Indeed, he had some difficulty in securing one. The meeting was postponed until they should arrive at Monterey and there General Kearny ordered its further postponement. Frémont consented, re-

⁴ Stephen Clark Foster, "Angeles from '47 to '48 as Seen by Stephen Clark Foster," MS in the Bancroft Collection, at the University of California. Foster was with the Mormon Battalion as translator and was the first alcalde of Los Angeles under the United States régime.

questing that Mason would give him satisfaction at his earliest convenience. This Mason promised to do. In 1850, when Frémont was representing California in the Senate at Washington, he received word from Mason that satisfaction would be granted if Frémont would come to St. Louis. By this time Frémont's resentment had cooled, and he ignored the communication. A little later the controversy was ended by the death of Mason.

Meanwhile Frémont indulged himself in that same indifference to orders that had characterized his relations with Mason. More than the specified twelve days followed the completion of details which should have led to his departure for Monterey, and still he lingered at Los Angeles. Kearny visited that city early in May, 1847. Evidently he had expected to find conditions unsettled in the south, but his report to the Adjutant-General, made on May 13, implied that false rumors had been circulated, probably by Frémont or men in sympathy with him. He found the people quiet. Frémont had been sent north to Monterey. That officer's conduct—as Kearny continued in his report—had been such that he would be compelled to arrest him when they arrived in Missouri, and send him to Washington for trial.

Frémont complained later that Kearny had given him no intimation of his intention to place him under arrest. The General's directions to Frémont upon their return to Monterey during the last of May should have been a warning, at least. The Colonel was not permitted to remain with his men; permission to visit other places was denied him; even the privilege of inviting some of his former companions to join him at Monterey was refused; and he was required to surrender his surveying instruments to Lieutenant Halleck. Upon the return overland

to the States (which was begun by Kearny on the very last day of May, 1847) Kearny's intention was further intimated. Frémont's numerous requests, some of them in writing, were denied. He was refused permission to proceed in advance with his topographical companions at his own expense; he was forbidden to take a cut-off in the vicinity of Great Salt Lake; he was compelled to camp at night in the rear of the main expedition. If Frémont, as he claimed, was subjected to other "indignities," these should have intensified the warning. He should have known that something unusual was impending. He was too clever to escape the inference, and a student of the period finds it difficult to avoid the suggestion that any failure to make preparation for some kind of a trial was deliberate on Frémont's part. This should be kept in mind when, at the trial, Frémont attempted to make a part of his defense the claim that he was separated from witnesses and arrested without warning of any kind. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the trial was used for a good deal of clever posing and stage play. Certainly, through the publicity given it by his father-in-law, he won a large popular following later.

General Kearny reached Fort Leavenworth on August 22, 1847, with Frémont "in his baggage." The Colonel was ordered to arrange all his affairs, to consider himself under arrest, and to report to the Adjutant-General of the Army at Washington at his early convenience. He made a brief stop at St. Louis, declined an invitation to a public dinner prepared in his honor, and reached Washington about the middle of September. These were disheartening days in the life of Frémont. To professional discouragement was added domestic affliction. He learned of the serious illness of his mother upon his arrival in

Washington, and repaired at once to Aiken, South Carolina. But when he arrived she was dead.

The citizens of Charleston knew nothing of the right or wrong of Frémont's conduct in California, but they presented him with an elaborately wrought sword testifying to their "high appreciation of the gallantry and science he had displayed in his services in Oregon and California." From the ladies of the same city he received a gold-mounted belt. The fact that he was in no condition to appreciate adequately the thoughtfulness of these friends in no way detracts from their good intentions.

Returning to Washington he began preparations for his trial. He had already petitioned the Adjutant-General for a full and speedy one. The charges against him, as they came from the War Department, were three in number. The first was mutiny, extending from January 17 to May 9, 1847; the second was disobedience; the third was conduct prejudicing good order and military discipline. Frémont believed these charges impeached his military, civil, political, and moral life. If true they would "subject me to be cashiered and shot under the rules and articles of war, and to infamy in public opinion." He asserted his intention to meet them "in all their extent."⁵

The trial opened at noon on November 2, 1847, in the Washington Arsenal in the District of Columbia. Upon the call of the roll, one of the thirteen officers composing the court was found absent, and it adjourned to await his arrival on the following morning. Next day he was still absent. A substitute had finally to be procured for the absentee before the court could begin with the case. Captain J. F. Lee was judge advocate. The attorneys for the

⁵ The full account of the trial is in *Senate Executive Document No. 33, 30th Congress, First Session*.

defense were Thomas H. Benton and William Carey Jones.

In the trial of a civil case the prosecution becomes the aggressive participant. In a court-martial the defense must dispose of the charges. The major witness for the prosecution was, of course, Brigadier-General Kearny. For the defense, Commodore Stockton and William H. Russell were among the most valuable, but there were many others. Frémont himself conducted the cross-examinations under the advice of his counsel. As the trial proceeded he became ever more insistent upon his right to have answers to questions which were rejected by the judge advocate. Written arguments and appeals came in increasing numbers. He was particularly interested in proving the ill-will and bad motives of General Kearny. Warmth and feeling grew on both sides. Before adjourning on January 8, 1848, Kearny requested permission to make a statement. He considered that the dignity of the court required that he should make the statement. When he was answering questions put to him at the last session, he said that the senior counsel, Thomas H. Benton, "sat in his place making mouths and grimaces at me, which I considered were intended to offend, to insult, and to overawe me." He requested no action from the court in the matter so far as he was concerned personally. He was perfectly "capable of taking care of his own honor."

This brought expressions of regret from the president of the court and a short explanation from Benton. In the early stages of the trial Kearny had twice sworn that Frémont had the originals of certain papers, "unless he has destroyed them." Then, according to Benton, the insulting thing happened. Kearny, while implying destruction of these papers, "fixed his eyes upon Colonel Fré-

mont, fixedly and pausingly, and looked insultingly and fiendishly at him." Benton did not propose to have his son-in-law given such a look without himself returning the stare with interest, provided he found the opportunity. He had waited long for this, but it had come. "I did today look at General Kearny . . . , and I looked at him until his eyes fell—till they fell upon the floor." While he denied any intention of offending the court he admitted gloatingly that he had won in a glaring contest with the General.

"The court deems it proper," was the conclusion regarding this episode, "in view of the mass of evidence on record, to remark that the court has been unwilling to confine the accused to a strict legal defense, which appeared to lie within narrow limits. Considering the gravity of the charges, the court has allowed the defense the fullest scope in its power to develop the instructions of the government, and all circumstances relating to the alleged misconduct; as well as to impeach the leading witness for the prosecution. The court has even indulged the accused in a course unusual, and without its approbation, in the final defense, of using indiscriminately matter which had been rejected or admitted in evidence. With all this latitude of evidence, and broader latitude of defense, the court has found nothing conflicting in the orders and instructions of the government; nothing impeaching the testimony on the part of the prosecution; nothing, in fine, to qualify in a legal sense the resistance to authority of which the accused is convicted. The attempt to assail the leading witness for the prosecution has involved points not in issue, and to which the prosecution has brought no evidence. In the judgment of the court, his honor and character are unimpeached."

On the last day of January the court rendered its decision. There were eleven specifications under the first charge, seven under the second, and five under the third, upon which the prosecution based its decisions, and Frémont was declared guilty of them all. Four members of the court recommended him to the lenient consideration of the President, first, because the circumstances which placed him between two officers of superior rank, each "claiming to be commander-in-chief in California," had created a situation which might have been embarrassing to an officer of greater experience than the accused; and, second, on account of the "important professional services rendered by him." Three other members of the court recommended clemency because the accused had rendered "distinguished professional service."

The President acted upon the suggestion of those seven members. Indeed, he did not agree with the court in all of its findings. The charge of mutiny he did not think a justifiable one. The other two—disobedience and conduct prejudicing good order—were justified and warranted the sentence of the court.

In the course of the trial Frémont made a better showing than Kearny. Of this there can be no doubt. He was advised by able and sympathetic counsel. Public sentiment, as revealed in the press of the day, was kindly disposed toward him. The court, on the whole, was generous in its attitude. And Frémont had made thoughtful preparation for his defense.

On the other hand, Kearny had not been as careful in his preliminary work as he should have been. He was out of his element in the courtroom. While the officers were sympathetic and he had a legitimate case against his insubordinate colleague, he presented it sometimes in-

effectively, and his memory was not always accurate. He stumbled and faltered and contradicted himself when he should have been clear and definite and certain. Evidently he was humiliated by the attitude of the public press, and his opponents were quick at sensing his embarrassment and using it to their own advantage. On occasions an uninformed observer might have gained the impression that the General was on trial instead of being the principal witness to prosecute the charges. This was unfortunate. It left a bad impression and Kearny suffered from it.

The charge has been made that Frémont's court-martial was directed largely by West Point interests, and that the intention was to destroy his popularity. The opinion was held by some of his friends at the time of the trial and has been accepted by some of his biographers. Undoubtedly these supporters of Frémont have based their conclusions on what at first appears justifiable evidence. General Kearny, who was responsible for bringing Frémont before the court, was a West Point man. The War Department, responsible for multiplying the charges, was in full sympathy, of course, with the advancement of West Point interests. Secretary of War Marcy, while not a graduate of West Point, could be relied upon to guard its interests. The work in which Frémont had been engaged had attracted attention in the public press of the day, and the reports of his Western explorations had been more widely read than any former official documents published by the government. Indeed, sheer interest in itself is not a quality usually associated with government reports, but it was observed in Frémont's publications.

It is not difficult to understand how some Army officials may have followed the career of this young and energetic explorer with a certain amount of envy. Add to this

indiscretions on his part in connection with the conquest of California, and it might be that some would insist upon taking advantage of such actions to destroy the fame of the man.

On the other hand, it may be pointed out that the reputation and influence of an institution or organization like West Point could not be materially affected by the work of a young explorer who, for a moment, turned conqueror. West Point and West Point men could not afford to direct their powerful influence—granted for the moment that they had it—to destroying a reputation or a character because the gentleman concerned “had entered the Army intensively” and “without passing through West Point,” to say nothing of the further reason “that he had become distinguished.” One might as well think of the colleges of the country condemning the career of Abraham Lincoln because he was not a product of those institutions. There were, undoubtedly, West Point men who did not approve of Frémont, but to say their disapproval was due to their West Point affiliations is absurd. A West Point environment has its limitations, and the training it affords may be narrow in certain respects, but the men who come from there are not trained to be petty in their attitude toward their fellow-men.

But one may accept the charge of Frémont’s supporters and still have something to say on behalf of the West Pointer. Frémont, an explorer, acting on the discretion which he believed had been given him, abruptly terminated his explorations and ultimately assumed the leadership of a filibustering expedition in a foreign territory. He believed this action on his part was responsible for Commodore Sloat’s raising the American flag at Monterey. This incident led to another change in Frémont’s position.

From a filibuster he became a member of the American forces. A few months later, in October, 1846, he learned that he had been appointed lieutenant-colonel in the Army of the United States. This fixed his status. He was a member of the land forces and not of the naval forces of his country. It was perfectly correct for him to co-operate with Commodore Stockton in the conquest of California and to place himself under the command of that officer during the period preceding the arrival of General Kearny. The arrival of the latter in December, 1846, however, introduced one of Frémont's superior officers upon the scene. A lieutenant-colonel in the Army of the United States was brought in direct contact with a brigadier-general.

Up to that time the former had received orders from a commodore in the Navy Department. But the brigadier-general brought definite orders from Washington—and the most recent orders issued by that government—authorizing him to take charge of the troops in California, and to arrange for the organization of a civil government in that territory. There were no conditions attached to the order. It was clear and specific. Kearny was to command the troops—all the troops—and was to organize the civil administration on land. It makes no difference what Frémont's relations with Stockton had been, he should have known that he must recognize his obligations to General Kearny when he was made familiar with the instructions of that officer. Disobedience in the Army is a serious charge, and Frémont, in his somewhat anomalous position, should have been peculiarly sensitive to the Army regulations. He was not. As lieutenant-colonel in the Army he deliberately attempted to recognize as his superior an officer in the Navy, and that in the face of what he must

have known to be the most recent orders from Washington, revealed to him by a brigadier-general in that division of the United States forces in which he was a lieutenant-colonel. This attitude is not conducive to order or co-operation, and it is directly opposed to the teachings of West Point. On this ground, then, a West Point man might judge Frémont harshly. But it would be due to Frémont's disregard of a custom which West Point training stressed and not to the fact that he had failed to enter the Army through West Point.

Jessie Benton Frémont, her father, and her husband accepted the West Point myth without question, but they required something more tangible on which to center their anger. West Point had turned out Kearny and Kearny was responsible for Frémont's embarrassment. What better object for attack could be imagined? And so the three attacked him venomously during his life and attempted to cover his reputation with ignominy after his death.

Toward Mrs. Frémont one may be more lenient in his criticism than toward the other two, but the charges against Kearny cannot be accepted with any more credence. She was never a safe witness when the interests of her father or her husband were involved—particularly interests which produced strong reactions. Her testimony suffered further by occasional tendencies to confuse imaginary with real incidents. Too frequently and too ardently she lived in a fictitious realm, and fact and fancy became hopelessly confused in her mind. But there is something fascinating about the vivacious Jessie, even when she is sailing out to attack under a false charge.

Senator Benton's attitude must be taken more seriously and the viciousness of his attack condemns him more

vigorously. His speech⁶ in the Senate opposing the promotion of General Kearny can be described as nothing less than savagely brutal. The ferocity of his charge is equaled only on occasions by the falseness of his accusations. There can be no excuse for such a malicious tirade, and the explanations which might be offered but reflect the more on the vindictive character of the man.

"I am the senior senator, elected for thirty years, and should set an example for order, not disorder, in this body," was one of the remarks with which he prefaced his speech, and he followed with an invective harangue which was a complete violation of that dignity of seniority which he had pledged himself to maintain. An animus pervades the entire attack, and he makes a petty figure as he lashes himself into a passion and struts and fumes across the page of history during those thirteen days—and a sad figure withal, because one may see him on other occasions approaching nothing less than greatness. So does hatred make pathetic figures of us all.

Frémont's feelings were no less vitriolic than Benton's, but he did not have the same opportunity to afflict his friends and acquaintances with them. There was a story—and apparently Benton was the author—that he made a special trip to St. Louis in December, 1847, for the sole purpose of challenging Kearny to a duel, but the General was then on his deathbed.

Curiously enough, one of the things for which Frémont impeached Kearny was an act that is generally approved by the Colonel's supporters. It will be remembered that Carson was sent east with dispatches following what Stockton and Frémont considered to be the completion of

⁶ *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, 30th Congress, First Session, pp. 977-1040.

the conquest of California. He met Kearny and gave him an account of conditions along the Pacific Coast. The General sent two-thirds of his force back to New Mexico as a result of that report, ordered Fitzpatrick to continue east with Carson's dispatches, and compelled the latter to turn about and guide him through the mountains and through the desert to California.

It was the proper thing to do. Carson had just been through the country and would be a more satisfactory guide than Fitzpatrick, while the latter could reach Washington with the dispatches as expeditiously as Carson. Furthermore, Carson had "worn out and killed thirty-four mules" in the distance he had covered. It was time for somebody to stop him. Evidently the act itself would not have been so bad if Kearny had written Stockton all about it. But in his letter of December 2, 1846, he stated simply: "Your express by Mr. Carson was met on the Del Norte, and your mail must have reached Washington ten days ago."

This was the real offense. The key to Kearny's character was to be found here. "Cuvier said that give him a bone and he would construct the animal That misleading letter was the bone out of which to make the man. The concealment of an act which was wrong in itself, and which it so much interested Commodore Stockton to know, showed with clearness of light the quality which was the root of his character—a falseness which contaminated every other quality."⁷

It would have been better if Kearny had stated in his letter exactly what he had done, but to damn him because he did not is likewise a grievous error.

⁷ Frémont, *Memoirs*, p. 585.

IX. THE PENALTY OF BLUNDERING

The trial brought Frémont a prominence which he did not appreciate at the time. Sympathetic reports that went out over the front pages of important newspapers revealed the sentiment of the public. He was the hero of Western exploration and the verdict was rendered in the heyday of that section's influence. At the suggestion of Benton, people believed the trial had been prosecuted by a gang of West Point graduates who were jealous of Frémont's fame. The public was in a tolerant mood.

To the explorer the verdict was more serious. It obliterated the silver lining, and temporarily took from him the accumulated prestige which he had enjoyed. His despondency was shared by his wife, but they were too proud to reveal this sentiment. After all, they were young and hope is persistent. The environment in which they lived was generous. They could not remain indifferent to flattering comments from press and platform, and even in the halls of Congress officials revealed their sympathy.

The day following the court-martial the Senate Committee on Military Affairs began investigating claims connected with the conquest of California. Claims from members of the California Battalion were of special interest to Frémont; they came from men who had served under him on the Pacific Coast. In the discussions which they provoked many a tribute was paid the "Pathfinder," but these did not please him more than the final adjustment, which compensated his former companions in arms. Here, at least, was something to alleviate the verdict of "guilty."

Another incident of the spring was his controversy with

Charles Wilkes. It was initiated by Benton. On May 9, 1848, the *National Intelligencer* published an account of a survey of the coast of California which two British vessels were making for the purpose of correcting an error in the charts then used by ships navigating that part of the Pacific Coast. These charts had placed from fifteen to forty miles too far east the coast and islands between Monterey and Cape San Lucas.

After reading the article, Benton wrote the editors that the correction had already been made by Frémont. This letter attracted the attention of Wilkes, who claimed in turn, through the columns of the same paper, that the correction had been made earlier by him. This was on June 8. Frémont entered the controversy at this point and the correspondence continued until June 20. Claims and counterclaims were made. Frémont had used the charts drawn up by Wilkes and published in 1844, but these did not have the corrections on them. Wilkes claimed that he had discovered the error just after they were published. Of course Frémont had no way of knowing this.

In concluding his comments on the surveys made by these men a supporter of Frémont says that both were wrong but that Wilkes surpassed Frémont in one respect, at least: "he eliminated the Buenaventura River from his maps before Frémont succeeded in removing it from his mind."¹

These things relieved the tension somewhat but they were events of a moment. A more permanent consolation came from occupation of a different type: Frémont took refuge in planning a fourth expedition to the Pacific Coast over a southern route.

¹ F. S. Dellenbaugh, *Frémont and '49*, p. 386.

The purpose of the expedition was to discover a route for a railroad. Frémont believed that depressions existed in the mountains between the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth parallels of north latitude which would make possible rail travel to the Pacific Coast throughout the year. To prove this he planned to conduct a party through the passes during the winter months. It was a project in which Benton was interested also.

Financing the undertaking was a big problem because Frémont did not have the support of the government as on former occasions.² On the other hand, it would be simplified somewhat by his plan to settle in California, thereby relieving him of the responsibility which a return trip would entail. Business men in St. Louis were willing to invest something in the plan, both in the form of con-

² It is interesting to know what attempts were made to secure Congressional aid. The Senate appointed a committee to consider the question, and on August 1, 1848, the committee submitted a favorable report, recommending the appropriation of \$30,000 for the purpose. On August 5 the Senate passed the following by a vote of 18 to 16: "For continuing and completing the surveys and explorations to be made by J. C. Frémont in Oregon and California, with a view to develop the geography of these countries, and to discover the practical lines of communication by railroads or otherwise between the valley of the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean, the results of said further explorations to be published under the direction, and subject to the disposition of Congress, as a national work without copyright, thirty thousand dollars" (*Senate Journal*, 30th Congress, First Session, 1847-1848, p. 519). This was inserted as an amendment to the appropriations for the year ending June 1849, but when it came before the House on August 10 it was rejected, 128 to 28.

The votes in both Houses have a certain significance. They were taken a few months after the court-martial of Frémont and at the time Benton was haranguing the Senate against the promotion of General Kearny. The appropriation was denied and Kearny secured his promotion.

tributions and in the extension of credit to Frémont. Benton probably contributed something.

Supplies were purchased in St. Louis and men were enlisted for the expedition. Some of the latter were companions on former explorations. Several members of the party joined with the idea of settling in California. Preparations were made at a small government post in the vicinity of modern Kansas City. Mrs. Frémont had accompanied her husband from New York and was remaining with him on the frontier until his arrangements were completed. These were busy times, but the two found mutual solace and pleasure in the midst of their labor. During the days they chatted while Frémont was engaged about the camp, and the nights they spent in comfortable quarters provided by Major Cummins, the Indian Agent for that section.

The crisp autumn days of late October were approaching when Frémont announced the completion of his preparations. The time for separation had come. Frémont pitched his camp ten miles farther west and Mrs. Frémont and her colored servant spent the night in the quarters provided by Major Cummins. The parting, the rain and storm, together with the howls and cries of a mother wolf for the young that Major Cummins had killed, prevented sleep during the first part of the night. From the fitful repose of the second part she was roused by the return of Frémont. He had come back through the storm for a final hour with her, one that passed all too quickly. The colored servant brewed a cup of hot tea, and they parted again, the "one into the midwinter snows . . . , and the other to the long sea voyage through the tropics." But the latter part of this plan was not fully carried out, for Mrs. Frémont returned to her father's home in Washington to

spend the winter, and in the spring she took passage to Panama, crossed the Isthmus, and went north by boat, instead of traveling the entire distance around the Horn by water.

Frémont, with his thirty-one companions, followed the southern Kansas River across the plains through a country which was something of an explorer's paradise. For a distance of four hundred miles they traveled a direct route, supplied with ample quantities of wood, water, grass, and game. Something of the old zest returned to him and his gratification at such an auspicious beginning gave new hope and interest to the undertaking. The soil, he observed, was exceptionally fertile, and he commented on the attractiveness of the country for future settlement. For these reasons, he believed the route he traveled would make the most ideal approach to the mountains—an approach which no prospective railroad builder could afford to ignore.

At Bent's Fort he made a temporary halt. Fitzpatrick was stationed as Indian Agent about thirty miles south at a place called Big Timber. Frémont visited him and was cordially received by both the Agent and his wards. From Fitzpatrick, from the Indian chiefs, and from the settlers and trappers at Bent's Fort, Frémont collected all the information he could about the country. They seem to have been unanimous in advising him against the undertaking at that time. It had begun to snow on the night of November 15 and continued throughout the following day. On the morning of the seventeenth they had their first view of the mountains in the distance, covered with a mantle of snow.

But this prospect did not discourage the Pathfinder. He wrote Senator Benton on that day that he would

ascend the Del Norte to its head, descend the Colorado, "and so across the Wasatch Mountains and the basin country somewhere near the thirty-seventh parallel, reaching the settled parts of California, near Monterey." This was in line with his belief that there was a pass in the Sierra Nevada somewhere between the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth parallels. The spirit and health of the party was splendid and the equipment was good, so why should he be discouraged?

"We are always up an hour or two before light, and the breakfasts are all over and the camp preparing to move before sunrise." But now he realized that this life had lost its charm. He associated it with the experiences of the trial and the verdict. This hung over him like a pall.

"I think that I shall never cross the continent again, except at Panama. I do not feel the pleasure which I used to have in those labors, as they remain inseparably connected with painful circumstances due to them. It needs strong incitements to undergo the hardships and self-denial of this kind of life, and as I find I have these no longer I will drop into a quiet life."

He did not realize that his trouble had come after he had abandoned exploration and had assumed the rôle of a military leader—that it was the incidents which had occurred during the interruption, rather than the work itself, which had taken from the task the essential "incitements."

Frémont arrived at Pueblo during the last part of November. Again he was advised to abandon any attempt to cross the mountains at that season. Such a passage might have been forced over the lower openings during an ordinary winter, but the old trappers could not recall a period when the snowfall had been as heavy. The explorer, however, could not be dissuaded. He was particularly

reluctant to cancel his plans at this time. A sort of stubborn recklessness possessed him and drove him on, and perhaps he felt that hardships ahead would give variety to his troubles. If so, he was to find his expectations fully justified. Later he attributed his misfortunes in the mountains to the ignorance of "Old Bill" Williams, the man whom he had employed as a guide before leaving Pueblo.

Of Bill Williams we know little. He was a man "whose name was a synonym for mountain knowledge and trappers' lore," and he has come down through the annals of Southwestern history as a sort of caricature, all his eccentricities accentuated. With the corners of his cap drawn up to resemble wolf's ears, his buckskin jacket pulled over his stooped shoulders, and tight-fitting trousers secured about his tall, spare form, he must have been a well-known figure along the southwestern border from 1820 to 1849. From the accounts of Micaiah McGehee he behaved very much as if he were on a perpetual "spree." He zigzagged in his walk, he swayed from side to side when riding a horse, and his gun wobbled back and forth across the mark when he was getting ready to shoot. But he had a reputation for reaching his destination, for exhausting the horse that tried to unseat him, and for pressing the trigger when the bead of his rifle was in line with his prey.

He had been a "sort of missionary" among the Osage Indians. Then he became a trapper. What induced him to change from serving the Indians to fighting them probably will never be known with certainty, but they learned to respect his rifle as much as they ever had respected his religion, and he trapped the remote haunts of the furbearing animals with slight interruption from his red rivals. For months he would follow his solitary occupa-

tion among the upland valleys and retreats, then bring his catch down to Taos—that mecca of the fur-trading fraternity for so many years—and go on a protracted drunk. The profit from his toil would soon disappear and “Old Bill” Williams would stagger back into the forests of his mountain retreat to begin over again. And so for years his eerie form flitted ghost-like between Taos and the western mountains.

A rollicking, reeling, dare-devil sort of fellow was Bill Williams when he consented to become the guide of Frémont’s fourth expedition during those last days of November, 1848, and yet he accepted the responsibility with some reluctance. Indeed he is reported to have warned the former Colonel against attempting to cross the mountains in the face of almost certain disaster, and at that time it was generally admitted that he knew the country as well as any man in the Southwest.³

With a well-equipped company, provided with about a hundred good mules and one hundred and thirty bushels of shelled corn, Frémont left Pueblo, taking a course west of south, and entered the first mountain range on November 26. Even at this time the thermometer registered zero in the middle of the day. They crossed the Sangre de Cristo Range through Mosca Pass and entered the San Luis Valley. Turning almost directly west they came to the Rio Grande River about December 11, near the present town of Del Norte.

They were at the foot of the San Juan Range with

³ Joseph J. Hill, “The Story of Bill Williams, One of the Southwest’s Most Mythical and Legendary Frontiersmen Now Completely Recounted for the First Time,” in *Touring Topics* for March 1930, includes a critical study of the part played by Williams in this expedition.

plenty of wood, a frozen river in front of them, a pass more than 8,000 feet high immediately ahead, and beyond that another, much higher. A few days later they were once more in the midst of high peaks, deep gorges, and multiplying obstacles.

An effort to cross the first range failed and they girded themselves for another attempt. It was a superhuman undertaking. As they approached the ridge of the mountains they received the full effects of a blizzard which swept across with terrific force. In the face of this, the men were almost blinded by the pulverized snow which beat into their eyes and collected in their beards, forming ice, which hung in sheets about their mouths and cheeks.

It was hard on the men, but it was deadly for the animals. As they approached the ridge over a trail through the snow, prepared by the use of mauls, a mule would occasionally lose its footing and roll into the depth below. On the ridge the jagged rocks were swept clean and there were bunches of grass to be found in sheltered crevices, but no warm-blooded animal could endure the severe cold and the razor-edged winds which swept over it. A dozen men were "variously frozen, face, hands, or feet," and dead mules were lying about the fire. The trail which they had made was strewn with articles of clothing, packs, pack-saddles, and bodies of dead animals.

Frémont made his way down to the border of some woods on the west side of the ridge. There he found protection from the winds, but the snow was too deep for the mules. It was necessary to keep them on the ridge, where the animals huddled together in the full violence of the storm. Sometimes one would be seen to "tumble down"; there he froze, and the snow would cover him. Again some would "break off and rush down toward the

timber" until they were stopped by the drift below. It took but a few days to destroy the entire train.⁴

In the meantime, Frémont decided to move camp back to the east side of the ridge on the headwaters of the Rio Grande. This required days of toil in the face of a rapidly diminishing food supply. The accumulation of misfortunes took the heart out of the little company, and in a letter to his wife Frémont's comment was "but, as you know, the party was not constituted like the former ones."

This was an unfair comparison. It is doubtful whether any company he ever led would have made a better showing under such conditions. Certainly, no former expedition ever endured such a severe test as was demanded of this one. And it might be added that Frémont probably would not have demanded as much of himself, nor of his men, on any former occasion.

It was plain to Frémont that he could not even retrace his steps without help, so he sent Williams, King, Brackenridge, and Croitzfeldt to Taos for aid. Remaining behind, he set the men to moving the remnants of their equipment down to the Del Norte. The distance was short, but as the men were weak from inadequate food, the snow was deep, and storms were frequent, the change was made slowly, the difficulties adding to the gloom of the company. Christmas Day found them established in their new camp. "Like many a Christmas for years back," he wrote his wife, "mine was spent on the summit of a wintry moun-

⁴ Frémont's own account of this expedition is given in his *Memoirs*, MS in the Frémont papers, the Bancroft Library, University of California; Micajah McGehee's "Rough Times in Rough Places—a Personal Narrative of the Terrible Experiences of Frémont's Expedition" in *The Century Magazine* for March 1891.

tain, my heart filled with anxious and gloomy thoughts, with none of the merry faces and pleasant luxuries that belong to that happy time." In the midst of all the cold and suffering, Frémont whiled away his Christmas Day reading from volumes of Blackstone that he had brought from the Benton library, and he assured his wife that he never would forget his first study of law.

The snow continued to fall. So did the spirits of the men. For sixteen days they waited anxiously for the coming of relief from Taos. Finally Frémont decided to wait no longer, for King's party might have been cut down by Indians or might have met with some accident. Leaving behind food enough for two or three meals and about five pounds of sugar per man, Frémont took four companions and started down the river.

On the second day after leaving camp he came upon a fresh Indian trail. This did not quiet his anxiety regarding the fate of the first relief party. The Indian trail led down the river, and was followed, of course. On the fifth day they surprised an Indian, who was alone on the ice, and captured him. He was a Utah, the son of a chief whom Frémont had befriended on one of his former expeditions. It was a fortunate meeting and the young man proved a friend indeed. He secured horses from his tribe and guided the party down to the vicinity of the Red River Settlement.

Next day they came upon three survivors of their first relief expedition, huddled around a little fire in a grove. King was dead. He had perished of starvation, and the others, facing a choice between cannibalism and death, had used his body for food. They had been too weak to move on. Placing them upon the horses, the two expeditions now pushed on to the Red River Settlement, arriving on

the tenth day following the departure of Frémont, January 20, 1849. A relief party was quickly organized and sent back under Godey, who was assisted by some Mexicans.

Frémont says he had left orders for the main camp to follow him down the river within three or four days unless relief arrived sooner, but the men remained where he left them for seven days before attempting the journey.

Another chapter of suffering was written by this march. After about two miles the Cosumnes Indian, Manuel, gave out and begged Haler to shoot him. Haler refused and Manuel dragged himself back to the abandoned camp, where he was later rescued. Twenty-two of the original party were left, but after eight more miles Wise discarded his gun and his blanket "and a few hundred yards farther fell over into the snow and died." Two Indian kinsmen of Manuel rolled him in a blanket and gave him a hurried burial in the snow along the river bank.

The marchers plodded on. The next night Carver's mind broke under the strain. He became insane and wandered out of camp the following morning. Sorel, too, gave out that day. Morel became snow-blinded and could go no farther. The others built a fire, placed Morel and Sorel beside it, and moved on. The situation was growing steadily more desperate. A deer was killed and occasionally a grouse gave the party a scrap of food, but these barely kept the men alive.

Finally, hoping to prevent cannibalism, Haler decided to split his party into groups and let each make its way as best it could. Haler headed one group of eight and set forth again. One of the small groups decided to wait for help where they were, living meanwhile off the members who should die. Rohrer, of Haler's group, gave out

and joined this party, but next day wandered off with Andrews and both died.

Meanwhile Haler's party staggered on. Hibbard gave out. They built a fire and left him beside it. Two miles farther on Scott gave out. They did the same for him and went on. In the evening they met Godey, hurrying with relief. Haler turned back with Godey and they saved Scott. Hibbard was dead when the rescue party reached him, his body still warm. Continuing back on the trail Godey saved the group which had established itself to await rescue. Members of the party were sent to the settlement, while Godey, with the Mexicans, continued up the river to rescue the baggage. All that survived reached the settlement, probably about February 5.

Eleven men—one-third of the party—had perished in the mountains. All might have perished if Frémont had not acted when he did. Others might have been saved if he had acted at first, instead of sending King.

The entire undertaking was a cruel mistake. Frémont led this expedition into the mountains in the face of almost certain disaster. His judgment had grown flabby and he had revealed considerable disregard for the lives of his companions. His attempt to place the blame on Bill Williams does not excuse him. There is good reason to believe that Williams tried to persuade him not to attempt the passage in the face of such a winter.⁵ Hatcher advised him to give up the idea. Others warned him. His own knowledge of the general character of the country should have checked him. In spite of all the advice and evidence, he persisted. Frémont was criminally culpable

⁵ "A Transcript of the Fort Sutter Papers," MS, Vol. XXXI, No. 126, in the Bancroft Collection, University of California.

and deserved condemnation for undertaking such a mission under the conditions which existed.

While Godey was rescuing the survivors, sending them down to the settlements and killing about a dozen additional animals in a futile effort to collect the baggage left along the trail, Frémont was regaining his strength under the generous hospitality of his good friend, Carson. Before leaving them in the mountains he had told the men that they would have to hurry if they wished to see him, as he was going to California. As soon as he heard that the survivors had reached the vicinity of Taos, he hastened his plans.

Everything, including his money, had been lost—everything except a baggage trunk containing some clothes which his wife had packed for him. F. X. Aubrey let him have a thousand dollars with which to purchase animals. The army officers at Taos, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque were generous in offering to assist him. Friends extended him credit for supplies, and he soon found himself at the head of another expedition consisting of twenty-five or thirty men and sixty mules and horses.

Frémont reached Socorro on February 24, 1849. He continued south along the west side of the Rio Grande to the vicinity of modern Hillsboro and turned west through the mountains to the present Lordsburg, New Mexico. His route was then southwest toward Santa Cruz in northern Mexico. He traveled west for some distance through Mexican territory. This was before the Gadsden Purchase had been completed, so that a large area now in southern Arizona belonged to that republic. From Santa Cruz, he turned north to Tucson and followed pretty closely a route later selected by the Southern Pacific Railroad to the Gila River.

The country through which he had passed was infested with some of the most aggressively treacherous Indians in the Southwest, the Apaches, and his courage and presence of mind probably saved his life and the lives of his men.

One of his party fell behind in violation of orders and was barely missed by two shots fired at him from ambush. A little later, Frémont discovered two Indians watching from across a ravine, and with his interpreter, boldly rode over to them. He gave his name and expressed great surprise and astonishment that they did not know him. He posed as a trader who was a friend of their tribe and who was in search of them to dispose of some of his merchandise.

The Indians were completely duped. He induced them to come to his camp, although they had confessed shooting at one of his men earlier. He entertained them elaborately, gave them generous presents, found out the route over which their tribe would return from Mexico, arranged a place of meeting for trade, and dismissed his guests. Frémont then traveled rapidly over another route and escaped.

From a region of snow and storm the Pathfinder had come into a land of drought and waste, where rivers disappeared in the sand. In places he found it necessary to travel by night in order to avoid the heat of the day. Upon reaching the Gila—probably in the vicinity of the town of that name—he followed the river to the Colorado. En route he came upon a company of about “twelve hundred men, women, and children from Sonora,” Mexico, who were on their way to dig gold in California. Information brought by these Mexicans confirmed rumors which had come to Frémont regarding the discovery made

by Marshall at Coloma, in the Sacramento Valley, over a year earlier. The "gold rush" was on.

Before leaving California with Kearny, Frémont had given \$3,000 to Larkin. The money was to have been used to purchase a piece of land back of San Francisco which Frémont had selected and on which he expected to build a home when he returned to California. According to Frémont, Larkin bought this land for himself and, for the Pathfinder, purchased instead a large tract at the foot of the mountains in what became Mariposa County—the tract which later became famous as the Mariposa estate. When Frémont had heard of this he had protested but could do nothing more. He was under arrest at the time and General Kearny was about to take him East. Even there, in the midst of bereavements and the court-martial, the subject had not been forgotten. He had discussed it with Benton and had considered plans for taking legal action against Larkin.

But all was changed by the stories of the gold strikes. He decided to make no protest. The beautiful dream home with its library and fireplace and large windows looking out upon the sea could be postponed temporarily. From Mariposa, perhaps he thought, could be collected the gold with which to build beside the Golden Gate at some later time. At any rate, he now made an agreement with twenty-eight of the Sonorans to dig for him on shares. He was to furnish supplies and they were to divide equally with him whatever gold they collected. Frémont assisted the women and children to cross the Colorado near the mouth of the Gila and then hastened on to Los Angeles. April was approaching and he hoped to meet Mrs. Frémont.

Meanwhile, she was experiencing some of the discomforts attached to travel by water and by land during the

rush of 1849. At Panama she had to wait weeks for a steamer. During that period the passenger list was extended sufficiently to fill several vessels. The lack of conveniences, the hardship to which she was exposed, and vague, indefinite information of the disasters which Frémont was experiencing proved too much for her. She became seriously ill. The tender devotion of friends soon restored her, and when the delayed ship was ready to start she was one of its passengers. At San Diego she heard that Frémont had been in Los Angeles about three weeks earlier and had gone on to San Francisco to meet her. The news brought relief and deep joy, but at San Francisco she experienced pangs of deep disappointment because he was not there. Frémont had hoped to join her at Monterey, where the steamer was scheduled to stop, but it had continued to San Francisco. He now hastened there and they were at last reunited.

X. A CALL FOR LEADERSHIP

The California into which Frémont came in April was not the province from which he had been taken by Kearny nearly two years earlier. The Spanish atmosphere had practically vanished. Energy had replaced listlessness, and purposefulness was crowding out indifference from the more desirable sections of the country. The gay costume of the native was giving way to the more somber apparel of the men from the Middle West. The *vacareo* was disappearing and the rodeo was degenerating into a historic pageant. The pueblos were becoming American towns, and the presidios were losing their identity. Even the ranchos were falling into the hands of the Americans, or into decay. A new environment had been created.

To be sure it was a rough, crude, and rather ugly thing, this new life which was taking the place of the old; but it possessed one important quality which the other lacked—it was popping with energy and super-optimism.

So great a change in a comparatively short time could be due to no ordinary influence. The conquest alone could not have produced it. Ultimately a change would have occurred as a result of that, but it would have been gradual, extending over a long period of years. Yet the change had come within a year of the conquest, and the incident which had produced it occurred on January 24, 1848, less than a fortnight prior to the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. It was the discovery of gold.

Gold had been discovered in California a few years earlier and a good deal of the precious metal had been received, but either it had not been advertised or the world

was not attuned to it at that time. The report which went out in the spring of 1848, however, aroused the avarice of men everywhere. It is difficult for people today to understand the magic in the world "gold" as it spread among the communities in this country and abroad. Of course the settlements in California were the first to be affected by it. At the beginning the people were skeptical. They talked much and they doubted more. But the sibyls accepted the reports and confirmed them by the portents they had observed, such as the appearance of the moon not more than a cable's length from the earth, a white ram as the playmate of an infant, and an owl ringing a church bell.

Before the end of June the question of fact involved was no longer open to doubt. Messengers with samples of the metal were drawing lumps of gold from their pockets and passing them out for inspection among eager crowds in various towns, and there usually followed the hasty preparations preceding a rush to the fields. Said Walter Colton: "The family who had kept house for me caught the moving infection. Husband and wife were both packing up; the blacksmith dropped his hammer, the carpenter his plane, the mason his trowel, the farmer his sickle, the baker his loaf, and the tapster his bottle. All were off for the mines, some on horses, some on boats, some on crutches, and one went in a litter." A landlady left her boarders without giving them an opportunity to pay her. It was estimated that three-fourths of the houses in San Francisco had been deserted before the end of June. The male population throughout the territory abandoned their interests, homes, ships, trades, professions, industries, occupations, debts, everything, and rushed to the mines. Along the roads leading to gold fields one would find mills

lying idle, fields of standing grain opened to horses and cattle, homes deserted, farms uncultivated, and signs of hasty departure everywhere.

And, indeed, one must not be surprised at this wholesale exodus to the gold fields. During those early days preceding the rush of 1849 rich rewards came to practically all who entered the region. From a trench a few feet wide and a hundred yards long two men obtained \$17,000 in seven days. In six or seven weeks seven Americans, assisted by seven Indians, collected two hundred and seventy-five pounds of gold. In another instance ten men made \$1,500 each in ten days, and a soldier on twenty days' furlough, after spending half his time going to and coming from the mines, made \$1,500. A single miner collected two and a half pounds of gold in fifteen minutes. In a week a rancher, assisted by Indians, obtained fourteen pounds, avoirdupois, and the editor of the *Californian*, using a pick, shovel, and pan, averaged \$100 a day while on a tour of the mines. The average return was from \$10 to \$50 daily, and it was estimated that \$600,000 had been secured by August. The interesting thing about the mining of this period, however, was the generous profit which came to all participating in it rather than the lucky accumulations of a few.¹

News of the rich deposits soon spread beyond the boundaries of California. The accounts were circulated in increasingly exaggerated form, but, as they multiplied and spread, incidents in the mines occurred which equaled or surpassed the expanding rumors.

The first official report of the discovery was sent out

¹ R. G. Cleland, *A History of California, the American Period*, pp. 227-229.

by Larkin and was received in Washington about the middle of September, 1848. Governor Mason's messenger bearing a more complete account reached the capital during late November or early December. His narrative gave many of the individual experiences recorded above and his messenger carried a box of the precious metal. As a result of this official information President Polk's annual message, which was read to the members of Congress on December 5, 1848, gave space to the reports, as follows:

It was known that mines of precious metals existed to a considerable extent in California at the time of its acquisition. Recent discoveries render it probable that these mines are more extensive and valuable than was anticipated. The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such an extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by the authentic reports of officers in the public service who have visited the mineral district and derived the facts which they detail from personal observation. Reluctant to credit the reports in general circulation as to the quantity of gold, the officer, Governor Mason, commanding the forces in California, visited the mineral district in July last for the purpose of obtaining accurate information on the subject. His report to the War Department of the result of his examination and the facts obtained on the spot is herewith laid before Congress The explorations already made warrant the belief that the supply is very large and that gold is found at various places in an extensive district of the country.

This announcement, coming to the people through the President's annual message to Congress, and circulating with current and extravagant rumors, was enough to induce thousands in this country and abroad to sacrifice everything for a fling in the gold fields of California. It is futile to attempt enumeration in the face of such a

movement. Indeed it might be more impressive if we avoided numbers. To a public but recently informed that Great Britain anticipated over 500,000 visitors from the United States during the summer of 1929, the announcement that 35,000 people crossed the plains and mountains to California during the spring and summer of 1849 arouses but feeble response. Only when we remember that the latter movement came before the conveniences for comfortable travel were available and before the wanderlust habit had taken possession of the people *en masse* can we appreciate adequately the migrations of that wonderful year. People who participated in it were the forebears of the automobile tourists who today swarm the highways of the country by millions. Yet whereas the modern tourists are in search of pleasure, the 'forty-niners were on profit bent.

Travel across the plains and over the mountains during the winter of 1848-1849 would have been a hazardous undertaking, and to wait for spring and summer would have postponed too long the possibility for gain. The earliest adventurers came by water. During the month ending January 18, 1849, over 3,000 passengers in sixty-one vessels had left Atlantic Coast cities for California. Fifty vessels sailed from American ports for San Francisco during the first week of February in 1849. Before the Ides of March had come and gone 17,000 people had taken passage from cities on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and before the end of the year 230 American vessels packed with human cargoes had dropped anchor in California harbors. The tales of suffering recorded by some of these poor wretches might have checked the ardor of friends at home had they been permitted to circulate, but they were completely smothered by the reports of enor-

mous gains secured by people in the gold fields—reports which lost nothing in the telling and which spread in a violent crescendo throughout the country.

Spring came, and with it migration by land. During a period of three weeks in 1849, about 18,000 people crossed the Missouri River bound for California. On the prairies west of Independence at this time an observer counted 1,100 wagons. For a period of two months there was a solid procession of emigrants passing from the Missouri River to Fort Laramie and beyond. Men, women, and children riding in all types of vehicles used during the period and accompanied by herds of animals soon cut many rut- and dust-infested roads across the plains of Nebraska Territory, and at night the glow of numerous campfires over the prairies gave something of the appearance of an area occupied by populous cities.

The excitement over gold made wonderful front-page material for newspapers, and the number of people who decided to move west became sufficiently large to attract the attention of writers of advertisements in the metropolitan press. More than forty were published in a single issue of the *New York Herald*. From such things as "Acid and Test Stone Appliances for Detecting Gold" and "Hunt's Patent Gold-Extracting Engine" to lamps balanced against upsetting and Spanish grammars and guide-books, there was a long list of articles which would interest the prospective emigrant. California overcoats, Dana's *System of Mineralogy*, and sauerkraut put in cans and guaranteed to keep for twenty-one years were found in the list.

Of course, the interest which aroused such a movement could not be confined to one continent or to one hemisphere. In Europe and in Asia as well as in America the

normal lives of people were affected by Marshall's discovery in a canyon of the Sierra. Five California trading and mining companies were registered in London before the middle of January, 1849, capitalized at more than two and a half million pounds. The political disturbances on the Continent during the year 1848 had created a restlessness to which the word "gold" made a particularly strong appeal. Many of the vessels leaving the ports of Germany, Holland, France, Spain, and Great Britain carried thousands of passengers who had no intention of coming to California, but there were other thousands who embarked for the gold fields or were directed to them en route. From China they came more reluctantly, but the census indicates that even the lethargic Oriental was not averse to the golden lure from across the Pacific. A few hundred came during 1849, and by the close of 1850 there were over four thousand. From Australia it was difficult to obtain passage on outgoing ships.

Nearly all the people who came by water landed in San Francisco. Something of the national and international excitement was reflected in that community when Frémont met his wife there in the spring of 1849. With the summer came a constantly increasing number of ships from the Atlantic Coast and from all parts of the world. This produced a great change in the character and appearance of the town. A ragged, disheveled community spread itself over the sand dunes extending back from the Bay. The people lived in hastily improvised houses or huts, and the merchants piled their goods helter-skelter on the streets in front of their places of business. Signs appeared in many languages, and the hotels were crowded to capacity. Bayard Taylor came to town during the last of August or the early part of September and secured

accommodations at the Parker House on the lower side of the Plaza, later known as Portsmouth Square. In his capacity as a reporter for a New York paper he was called upon to make observations, a congenial task in such an interesting environment. Speculation was conspicuously prevalent on every hand. A gentleman from New York had brought fifteen hundred copies of the *Tribune* with him and within two hours he sold them at a dollar apiece. The hotel where he stopped—an ordinary frame house—rented at \$110,000 a year, \$60,000 of which was paid by gamblers who occupied practically the entire second story. A tent, fifteen by twenty-five feet, which was called “Eldorado” and was occupied by gamblers, brought \$40,000. On a corner of the Plaza was a building called the Miners’ Bank which was about “half the size of the fire engine house” in New York and which rented at \$75,000. Merchants paid \$40,000 annually for one-story buildings with twenty-foot frontage. The United States Hotel brought \$36,000 net, and the government paid \$7,000 for a building for a post office.

Fortunes were made in California outside the gold fields during the days of '49. Among the millionaires of San Francisco was a man with an income of \$50,000 a month who had fought as a common soldier in the battle of San Pasqual and who had been extraordinarily lucky in his investments. A citizen of the town died in the autumn of 1848 insolvent to the amount of \$41,000. The administrators were slow in settling up the estate and in the meantime real estate advanced so rapidly in value that his property paid his debts and left an amount sufficient to bring in a yearly income of \$40,000 to his heirs.²

² Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado* (1885), pp. 56-59.

Wages and salaries were commensurate with rents and speculation. Car men were paid \$6,000 a year. Ordinary day wages amounted to fifteen and twenty dollars. Servants received as much as two hundred dollars a month, when they could be procured. Disheartened gold-seekers were returning from the mines when Taylor arrived in San Francisco, but the number was not large enough to meet the growing demand for labor. From a few hundred in March and April the community had increased to a floating population of six thousand by the first of September.

Before these changes occurred in San Francisco Frémont had moved his family to Monterey. By doing this he relieved Mrs. Frémont of the injury he believed she had experienced from the trade winds farther north, established a home nearer his Mariposa ranch, and avoided the hardships created by the increasingly congested conditions in the city beside the Golden Gate. In Monterey the wanderers found comfortable quarters in the house of the exiled Governor, Castro. The mansion was an adobe building having a long front on the bay and two wings running back to connect with a high-walled garden. It was a lovely place, with its soft-colored adobe walls and its fluted red tiles for roof and coping around the garden—a garden made beautiful and fragrant by an appropriate arrangement of hedges of pink Castilian roses. The Frémonts were given one wing of the house, Mme Castro and her children occupied the other, and a flour merchant used the central portion for a warehouse.

In this comfortable setting Mrs. Frémont gained in physical strength and in the art of preparing meals *sine* potatoes, *sine* chickens, *sine* eggs, *sine* butter, *sine* milk, a good part of the food supply having gone with the gold

hunters to the mines. She complains of the awkwardness of having only Indian men for kitchen service, but she was thankful for the homekeeping, domestic atmosphere created by the Spanish women and she acknowledged their friendly help and sympathy.³ In time she secured an English woman, a recent arrival from Australia, and life began to assume its accustomed comfort and regularity.

During these months Frémont's chief outside interest centered around the Mariposa estate or Frémont Grant which Larkin had purchased for him in 1847. This was a tract about seventy miles square and containing 44,380 acres. Situated in the valley of the Mariposa River, it had been granted originally by the Mexican government to Juan B. Alvarado and consisted of land suitable for grazing. The boundaries were not fixed, however, and the grantee was permitted to locate his claim on any part of a very large area. When the grant was about to be surveyed Frémont requested a long strip in the valley along both banks of the Mariposa, but the United States official told him the tract must be in a compact form. He then chose lands covering a valuable mining section which included such rich deposits as the Pine Tree and Josephine mines near the Merced River.

Gaining control of these properties brought fresh difficulties. Many of the workings had been in possession of miners for some time, and although they knew Frémont, they had no intimation of his intention of evicting them. Indignation against him was strong and numerous legal obstacles were thrown in his way. These failed, however,

³ Jessie Benton Frémont and Lieutenant Francis Preston Frémont, "Great Events during the Lives of Major General John C. Frémont . . . and of Jessie Benton Frémont," MS in Bancroft Collection, University of California, pp. 119-124.

to prevent confirmation of the grant, which Frémont won in 1856.

Under the Mexican law the grantee had no right to minerals, however, and this led to further controversy, for the United States had intended, apparently, to confirm the grant as originally made and the American law spoke of confirming, but not enlarging, the Mexican title. This controversy, too, was settled in Frémont's favor in 1859.⁴

The accumulated discontent which these differences provoked added worries to his later life and the murky rumors bred during that stormy period have come down to the present time and have left his name bespattered with implications, some of which have not been adequately explained.

But Frémont was not disturbed by these things during the summer and fall of 1849. His home in Monterey was about one hundred and twenty-five miles from the estate, and he rode back and forth, watching his wife regain her strength at the former place and encouraging his Sonorans in collecting a fortune in gold on the latter. At the Monterey end of one of these trips Frémont found his wife sufficiently strong to undertake "a turn of camping travel." A carriage had been shipped to them around the Horn, built with sliding seats to make a comfortable resting-place, but to provide horses accustomed to drawing a carriage was not so easy. After numerous futile efforts to induce the California mustang to assume this responsibility, the Colonel had to resort to "mules with worn trace marks." "But four fairly good mules," Mrs. Frémont concluded, "in new, fine harness are not so bad, and the two Indians, fastening their *riatas* to the team, led as

⁴ J. Ross Browne, *The Mariposa Estate: Its Past, Present, and Future*, 1868.

postilions, making an unusual but most effective six-in-hand outfit."

And so, with considerable *éclat*, the Frémonts began a camping trip which extended over a period of several weeks, during which time they visited places made interesting by the Colonel's association with them a few years earlier. The ride up to San Francisco through the beautiful valleys of the Coast Range with "the yellowing oats and the orchard-like live oaks and herds of grazing cattle," the invigorating sea breezes and the soft blue sky, was particularly charming. There were always the early start in the morning, the sunrise from behind the hills, a halt at ten for breakfast, and the foraging for food among the ranches nestled away in the hills to interest the little party. And once, Beale, who accompanied them, "dashed up bareheaded, carrying something precious in his hat and shouting his call of victory, when the horse got his foot down a gopher hole, and man and horse made a flying somersault. The three precious eggs were smashed on the ground and he was not to be consoled that I should lose such a rare dainty."

These delightful outdoor excursions finally terminated in a trip to San Francisco in the interest of the Mariposa estate. Since satisfactory hotel accommodations could not be obtained, Frémont bought a ready-made Chinese-built house, grooved together like a puzzle, the only nails required being those which fastened the shingles to the roof. Grass hammocks were used for beds, and a good deal of the outdoor life to which they were accustomed was retained. Mrs. Frémont believed the site occupied by their cottage was later used for the present Palace Hotel.

The accounts she wrote later of those days in San Francisco during the fall of 1849 have the happy golden

tinge with which memory often gilds the path of retreating years—the pleasant features presented in an attractive setting, the unpleasant cast into the limbo of discarded things, thereby giving a false hue to the vanished life and ignoring phases out of which character is built.

Meanwhile the Sonora Indians had been extracting large quantities of gold from the streams and canyons of Frémont's Mariposa estate, and this was transported in sacks to Monterey and deposited in boxes and trunks in the attic of his house. The amount stored is not given by Mrs. Frémont though her implications appear almost incredible—the individual sacks were estimated at \$25,000—but it was a time of remarkable discoveries as well as an era of extravagant stories, and the facts in this case may have equaled the report given, as they did in other apparently exaggerated accounts which were verified by reliable witnesses. Frémont's negro, Saunders, was permitted to work long enough to collect \$1,700 in gold, with which he bought the freedom of his wife and children who were held in slavery in Washington. The Indians, however, had had enough. Greed did not master them as it did the whites, evidently. One of their number came to San Francisco to request Frémont to pay them off and release them from further obligations. According to the agreement, this required him to give them a share of the gold stored at Monterey. To go there and supervise the division would subtract a week from the joyous days in San Francisco, so Mrs. Frémont wrote later, and this he would not do. Instead he sent the keys, with a note to a neighbor, and permitted the Indians to make the division themselves, and, behold, they took neither too much nor too little, but made an accurate evaluation according to the arrangements previously entered into!

While the Frémonts were enjoying outdoor life during the beautiful autumn days of that wonder year in California, and while the people experienced an economic prosperity nothing less than fabulous in its proportions, the social and political conditions of the country declined rapidly. The Mexican régime was never organized to cope with a situation such as the immigration of 1849 had created, and whatever political machinery existed formerly had given way before the rush. The immigrants had come for gold and not to establish a social order. Indeed, many of them were opposed to order of any kind and their presence in a community created a demand for some system of policing.

There had been some agitation on behalf of a better administrative régime during the winter of 1848-1849, and the demand had increased in the spring. When, in May, the people learned that Congress had adjourned without providing a government for the territory, Governor Riley recognized the popular desire by fixing August 1 as the date for the election of delegates to a convention whose duty it should be to draw up plans for a central government. The Convention met at Monterey on the first Monday in September and was in session until near the middle of October preparing a state constitution. In November the constitution was adopted and officers were elected to man the new government and to represent it in the lower house of Congress. A month later, December 15, the first legislature met at San Jose. Five days later still, a state organization was established, and Peter H. Burnett was inaugurated as Governor. This was followed almost immediately by the election of Frémont and Gwin as Senators from California to Washington.

Of course this was all embarrassingly irregular. California had never served a territorial apprenticeship. It had not been admitted to the Union. And yet it had elected officers for a state government and Representatives and Senators to Congress, and the latter were sent to Washington to hasten the passage of the bill which would give the state admission. Nor was this all. On February 9, 1850, seven months before the state was admitted to the Union, the California legislature passed the following resolution: "That the Governor be, and he is hereby authorized and requested, to cause to be procured, and prepared in the manner prescribed by the Washington Monument Association, a block of California marble, a cinnabar, gold quartz, or granite of suitable dimensions, with the word 'California' chiseled on its face, and that he cause the same to be forwarded to the Managers of the Washington Monument Association in the City of Washington, District of Columbia, to constitute a portion of the monument now being erected in that city to the memory of George Washington."⁵ And it was done.

In the meantime Frémont's interest had been quickened. At the opening of the first legislature he had gone to San Jose with half a dozen others to become a candidate for the United States Senate. Like the others, too, he had probably kept that particular style of "open house" which helped to give the appellation "Legislature of a Thousand Drinks"⁶ to California's first senate and assembly. It is not likely that he would have succeeded without doing so. On the evening of December 22, according to Mrs. Frémont, he came to their home in Monterey "dripping wet

⁵ John F. Davis, "The History of California" in H. Morse Stephens and Herbert E. Bolton (eds.), *The Pacific Ocean in History*, pp. 83-114.

⁶ See Frederic Hall, *History of San Jose*, pp. 218-221.

and brilliantly happy." He had ridden the seventy-five miles from San Jose through the rain to inform her of his election and to announce that they would take passage for Washington on January 1. On the appointed day they were "rowed out to the steamer in another rain storm, but we laughed over it and quoted a home song Mr. Frémont loved:

'What care I for wind or rain
When I'm coming back again!'⁷

But Frémont and his wife found the trip no holiday jaunt. Both were ill a good part of the way and reached Washington in a rather weak physical condition. Frémont drew the short term in the Senate and was in the capital less than a month. He was not idle, however. Gwin courteously gave way to him, and during that time he introduced, or prepared for introduction, nearly a score of bills, more than a third of which pertained to a settlement of the land question in California—a question in which he had a vital personal interest. Then he returned to the Pacific Coast to campaign for re-election and to meet a defeat which was unmistakable in its implications.

Frémont's conduct during the early period of political agitation must have been a source of embarrassment and disappointment to his friends. In the spring and summer of 1849, the conditions created by the rapid increase in population, and the growing demand for a more stable social order afforded an enviable opportunity for leadership, but Frémont played little part in public affairs. He had professed a love for California. He claimed property

⁷ Jessie Benton Frémont and Lieutenant Francis Preston Frémont, "Great Events, etc.," MS in the Bancroft Collection, University of California, pp. 127-128.

in the territory. He was familiar with conditions in the country. He had participated in the military and civil affairs during the period of the conquest. He was regarded by some as the first citizen of the Pacific Coast.

And yet he took no leading part in bringing order out of disorder during those troublesome times. While notices were circulated and delegates were chosen to a convention and preparations were made for its accommodation, he hitched mules to a carriage and took his family for an outing through the quiet valleys, his former haunts. Instead of coming out vigorously and openly for an orderly régime at a time when every important influence in the territory was badly needed, he remained in the background. Was he indifferent? Or was he merely waiting to reap advantage from any turn events might take? The most favorable thing said of him comes as usual from the pen of his wife, but it reflects credit on her rather than on the Colonel. According to this they returned to Monterey when the Convention met in September, and its members were occasionally guests in their home. She also takes to herself some credit for preventing the introduction of slavery in California through exercising her influence upon various members of the Convention. But Frémont himself was silent. After the preliminary steps had been taken, after the delegates were elected to a convention, after the convention drew up a constitution, after the constitution had been accepted by the people and officers had been elected to administer the new state government, after these had met in the newly chosen capital—in other words, after the organization had been formed—Frémont came forward to seek an office which would take him out of the state and back to the scene of his recent humiliation in Washington.

XI. THE ELECTION OF 1856

After serving twenty-one days in the Senate of the United States, Frémont returned to California to canvass for re-election, but an attack of sciatica or rheumatism prevented him from making an active campaign. This circumstance may have contributed to his defeat—Senator Benton believed it did—but it is equally probable that it prevented a still more humiliating rejection. With conditions in California as they were at that time, defeat was almost certain to have been his portion. He was not clever in politics, and campaigning was not one of the things in which he excelled.

He was inefficient in business, but to this and to pleasure he turned his attention. His entire time should have been devoted to his Mariposa estate. An earnest attempt to conciliate the miners might have won them over and he would have been relieved of some of the expensive litigation which subsequently increased the number of his enemies and multiplied his worries. Frémont was never cautious in such matters, however, and an opportunity for speculation which came to his notice at this time occupied a good deal of his enthusiasm and energy.

As a rule the California Indians were a weak and indolent lot and were never a serious menace to the whites. But even the meek may turn if sorely pressed, and the rapid extension of mining operations along the foothills of the Sierra during the years 1849–1850 crowded the natives from their accustomed haunts. Food was scarce and the temptation to plunder became correspondingly greater. Cattle began to disappear from the herds of the whites, and sometimes an Indian paid for them with his

life. Attacks and counter-attacks, charges and recriminations piled up until government officials felt compelled to investigate the situation.

They found the Indians ill-tempered and pressed by hunger and the whites intolerant and hostile. The commissioners decided that providing food for the natives would be the easiest way out of the dilemma. Adequate funds were not available for this purpose, and they had no authority to incur obligations which would exceed the appropriation already made. Frémont knew this, but apparently he wanted to furnish a number of beef cattle, sufficient to provide the Indians with food, and "take a chance" on getting his money from the government. The proposal was accepted, but not without some reluctance on the part of the commissioners, if we accept the statement made by one of their number.¹

Frémont valued the cattle delivered by him at something over \$180,000. The commissioners had only a fraction of that amount, but ultimately the government appropriated the required sum and for all practical purposes the incident should have been considered closed. And so it would have been if Frémont had not become a presidential candidate. In 1856 his political opponents, beginning to investigate his earlier career, found some irregularities in this particular transaction, but responsibility for these rested as heavily on the "higher-ups" who had approved the settlement as on Frémont.

Meanwhile, there were other things which demanded attention. There was the big fire in San Francisco, which destroyed the Frémont home; there was the illness of his

¹ This was E. W. Barbour. See *Political Pamphlets and the Campaign of 1856*, No. 27; and the *Congressional Globe*, Part III, 34th Congress, First and Second Sessions (1855-1856), pp. 2019-2023.

wife, which was aggravated by the loss of the home; there were the growing disturbances which led to the organization of vigilantes in San Francisco; and there was the need of capital to develop his Mariposa estate. Believing that funds could be secured in Europe more easily than in the United States, he made plans to go abroad. Such a trip might restore Mrs. Frémont to health and vigor, and it would afford pleasure to them both.

They sailed from New York for Europe in March, 1852, and remained abroad over a year. In England they were elaborately entertained by prominent government officials, and Mrs. Frémont wrote long letters to her father, telling him enthusiastically how her hand had rested in the palm of this great man or had been kissed by that one. The social life appealed to her immensely and aroused all her enthusiasm. She wrote minute descriptions of meetings with the President of the Royal Geographical Society, with the Duke of Wellington, with Queen Victoria, with a relative of the Bonaparte family in Paris, of dinners and teas and fêtes and balls, and of magnificent rooms and gorgeously dressed assemblies.

In their temporary home on the Champs Elysées they were in the midst of the French life which both loved. They saw the official entrance of Napoleon, as Emperor, and a little later witnessed the elaborate pageantry which accompanied his marriage to Eugénie de Montijo. They saw them in the glass coach, the Emperor brilliantly decorated, sitting upright with half-closed eyes, and the Empress pale and as rigid as a waxen image. It was all so new, so entrancing, so enticing, so full of beauty, and so different from the world in which they had lived.²

² Allan Nevins, *Frémont*, Vol. II, chap. xxvi.

In Europe, business had given way to pleasure, and now the time came when pleasure must give way to business. Many things were urging Frémont to return home. His Mariposa estate needed him; but something more inviting lured him. The officials at Washington had decided to survey routes for a prospective railroad from the Mississippi to the Pacific, and Frémont wanted to participate in this work. But he could hardly have expected government appointment for such a service. His court-martial and his subsequent refusal to accept the President's pardon had cut him off from the Army, and there were capable officers in the service who were available for the work. He determined to make an independent survey.

Frémont professed to believe that his fourth expedition had failed because the guide, Bill Williams, had misled him, and he clung to the notion that the best route for a railroad to the Pacific would be found in the vicinity of the thirty-seventh and the thirty-eighth parallels, the region he had attempted to explore in 1848-1849. As on the former occasion, he chose the winter months for the survey, because that would be the most suitable time to select passes through the mountains. With twenty-one companions, including ten Delaware Indians, he left Westport toward the end of September, 1853. The country examined, he says, "was for about three-fourths of the distance—from the Missouri, at the mouth of the Kansas River to the valley of the Parowan, at the foot of the Wasatch Mountains, within the rim of the Great Basin at its southeastern bend—along and between the thirty-eighth and the thirty-ninth parallels" He came to the Sierra Nevada near the thirty-seventh parallel and, instead of attempting to force a pass, swung sixty or eighty miles to the south and entered California, where

the mountains "suddenly break off and decline into a lower country."

The expedition contributed nothing to geographical knowledge. It did not add to Fremont's reputation as an explorer. He came to it fresh from the pleasures of a year abroad. The old courage and stamina are revealed again—for in sufferings endured and hardships encountered this was comparable with the fourth expedition in many ways—and his ability to retain the esteem of his men in the midst of privations was there also. But his relations with them were probably not quite as intimate as on former occasions. Some of the heart had gone out of the work. It had become more or less mechanical, and the camp of the Pathfinder began to smack, just a wee bit, of some of the pomp and ceremony he had seen in Europe.

Why did he undertake it? Doubtless there were many reasons. Of course, he was interested in the construction of a railroad across the Far West, and he wanted to prove that the route he had selected was the most satisfactory one for such a road. But perhaps there was another reason which he would not give. To the West, as a field of exploration, he may have felt that he had a peculiar right. Although the government did not want his services, he believed the public did.

In one respect Frémont gained from his fifth expedition. His letter to the editors of the *National Intelligencer*, giving a brief summary of the results of his explorations, was published in that periodical and was widely read. It was subsequently embodied in government documents.³ In this way his intimate associations with the West and his contribution to a better appreciation of that section

³ *Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 67, 33d Congress, First Session.*

were kept before the public. The West had allied itself with the idea of a strong national government and it was developing an opposition to slavery. Influences which were to coalesce the factions of the West and the North into a new political party were already at work. Frémont's name had not been associated with the political life of the country in any unpleasant way and he would be in line for recognition when a suitable political organization should be perfected.

The problem of organizing the restlessness of the 'thirties and 'forties for political purposes proved an exceedingly difficult task. During the early stages the various factions were so interested in immediate and personal grievances that little if any effort was made at pooling the discontent. Not until blind leaders, by passing the Kansas-Nebraska Act, struck down the framework of compromise which had been erected at considerable effort between 1820 and 1850, was it possible to utilize the aggrieved forces of dissatisfaction for political ends. By 1854 the time had come and steps were taken to perfect an organization.

While Congress was discussing the Kansas-Nebraska bill, citizens of Ripon, Wisconsin, met and suggested the formation of a new political party. A few weeks later—after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill—citizens of Jackson, Michigan, invited opponents of slavery extension to assemble there on July 6, 1854, and as a result of that meeting the present Republican party came into existence.

To oppose the extension of slavery and to favor the repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Fugitive Slave Law were the principal requirements for membership in the proposed party. Members of the Jackson assembly recom-

mended that a general convention be called for the purpose of formulating "effectual measures" for carrying out this program. Before adjourning, the convention nominated a state ticket composed of Whigs, Free-Soilers, and anti-Nebraska Democrats. Just a week later, on the anniversary of the enactment of the Ordinance of 1787, similar conventions were held in Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Vermont, and in the last two the name "Republican" was suggested for the new party.

In June 1855, a step was taken which was to lead to the formation of the new Republican party throughout the entire northern and western sections of the country. A political club was organized in the national capital under the name of the "Republican Association of Washington, D.C." Its function was to give organized expression to the sentiment found in other Republican organizations which had been formed. The platform declared (1) that Congress had no power over slavery in states; (2) that slavery should not be permitted in territories of the United States; (3) that officers should be chosen by direct vote; and (4) that officers selected must support this platform.

This club was formed to spread Republican principles and to encourage the organization of a large political party. In January 1856, it sent out a circular urging the formation of Republican Associations in every city, town, and village in the Union, and recommended that the names of officers chosen be sent to the Washington Association. The further suggestion was made that such local bodies would forward the names of prominent people living in every community, so that the Washington Association could send them literature. In this same month of January a call was sent out from the Washington Association

for a general convention to meet at Pittsburgh on February 22, 1856. This was signed by chairmen of the state Republican conventions of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin.

A preliminary meeting for organizing was held at the Monongahela Hotel in Pittsburgh on the evening of February 21, at which Francis P. Blair, Sr., was chosen president. The Convention opened on February 22, as scheduled, and attracted general interest, Horace Greeley giving it considerable space in the columns of the *New York Tribune*.

In addition to the formation of local committees, such as had been recommended at former meetings, the Convention provided for the selection of a general committee to be composed of one member from each state. It was to be a National Republican Committee. Although a large section of the country was not represented, "unalterable attachment to the Union" characterized the spirit of the members, and they were equally outspoken in their opposition to slavery extension. Sympathy for Kansas, or rather for the "free-state men" in Kansas, was heartily endorsed.

The radical sentiment in the Convention was responsible, probably, for the mass meeting held in the city on the evening of February 23. Greeley addressed the audience and, among other things, suggested that the North could aid Kansas by sending well-armed emigrants into the territory.

Almost immediately the National Committee issued a call for a National Convention to meet at Philadelphia on June 17, the anniversary of Bunker Hill, for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice-

President of the United States. Participation in the selection of delegates was not to be restricted by former party affiliations. Any who were opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, to the extension of slavery, and to the policy of the administration then in power, and who were in favor of admitting Kansas as a free state and of restoring "the action of the federal government to the principles of Washington and Jefferson" were invited to participate. The call was signed by delegates from twenty-two states, including Kentucky, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

Public sentiment in the North was ripe for the type of propaganda circulated by the National Committee during the weeks following, but the very nature of the principal plank in the party platform tended to restrict membership to a section. The South could not participate. The Republican party was one with strong sectional views, which it proposed to force on the central government through agitation. Astute leaders in the organization must have realized that it would be impossible to convert Southern planters to the principles of their party. They must have known that their program would lead inevitably to war. But they felt there was a principle involved which was worth even a war.

Unfortunately, the South felt that the enforcement of the principle was an invasion of their rights, and they were ready to fight to resist such an invasion. Each month that passed saw the issue more sharply drawn and a satisfactory settlement more difficult to formulate.

The Republican National Convention met on June 17, 1856, with representatives present from practically all the Northern states, the four Southern states represented at the Pittsburgh convention, the territories of Kansas, Ne-

braska, Minnesota, and the District of Columbia. Colonel Henry S. Lane of Indiana was chosen the permanent chairman.

The selection of a candidate for the presidency had been pretty well decided before the Convention met. Seward had practically eliminated himself. He would not have rejected the nomination if it had been offered him, but he refused to do anything to influence the choice of the Convention. He probably wanted it in a half-hearted way. Chase would have accepted the candidacy, but the Convention felt that it would be impossible for the party to win the election with him as the leader. McLane, a member of the Supreme Court, would have accepted the nomination, and the Pennsylvania delegates worked diligently to elect him, but the opposition was too strong.

Frémont's stock had been mounting among the Republicans from the beginning, and when the Convention met he was practically assured of the nomination. There was a rumor current at the time that Frémont had been offered the Democratic nomination and had rejected it because that party had passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill. Whether true or not, this served to strengthen his reputation with the Republicans. After all, as one Western paper expressed it, the cause and not the candidate was the important thing. While the editor of the *Daily Gate City*, a little paper published in Keokuk, Iowa, was personally opposed to the selection of Frémont, if the Pathfinder could strengthen the cause even he would support him. And Frémont was nominated.

The platform was in keeping with the ideals on which the party was formed. It began with a statement commending the principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution. So far, there could

be no opposition to the program of the revolutionary body. Next the platform asserted the right of Congress to exercise sovereign power over the territories of the United States, and declared it was the duty of that body to prohibit these "twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery." The attitude of the administration toward Kansas was condemned and the immediate admission of that territory into the Union was recommended. A railroad to the Pacific over a central and practical route was demanded, Congressional appropriations for improving rivers and harbors were favored, and liberty of conscience and equality of rights among all citizens were declared to be absolutely essential.

The honest intentions of the members of the new Republican party cannot be questioned. Something of the fervor of the crusader surrounds them, and a great deal of the intolerance of religious fanatics.

"Never in our history," says Rhodes, "and probably never in the history of the world, had a more pure, more disinterested, and more intelligent body of men banded together for a noble political object than those who enrolled themselves under the Republican banner." It was a formidable group. College and university professors, men of literature and science, clergymen, teachers in secondary schools, and idealists from all walks of life were united to prevent the expansion of slavery.

Frémont was informed of his nomination by a special committee. His letter of acceptance was dated July 6. In this he promised to work for the interest of the whole country regardless of party or section, but he implied that Republican legislation, even if it struck at the interests of the South, would benefit the people as a whole. The laws of Congress, affecting territories, would be faithfully

executed. The corrective for international misunderstanding was to avoid secret diplomacy, and he would favor "firm and open diplomacy in our foreign relations."

"Trusting that I have a heart capable of comprehending our whole country, with its varied interests, and confident that patriotism exists in all parts of the Union, I accept the nomination of your Convention, in the hope that I may be able to serve usefully its cause, which I consider the cause of constitutional freedom."

A little later Frémont received a delegation notifying him that he had been nominated for the presidency by the American party at a convention held in New York. In a carefully phrased letter he accepted, intimating a desire to establish more cordial relationship among the various reform groups throughout the country with the idea of giving to the movement an even stronger national character than it possessed. There is not sufficient reason to believe that the ideas expressed in these letters of acceptance were suggested by political leaders of the period. After all, they were in harmony with the platform and it took no particular acumen to pen such an acceptance.

Did Frémont possess those qualities which one has a right to expect in the man chosen to occupy the highest office in the United States? It is true that he had been fairly successful as an explorer. It is also true that his courage, when dealing with physical dangers, was ample. Beyond this it is difficult to go with any degree of assurance. His connection with the Bear Flag uprising, whether one credits him with initiating the movement or whether he is proved to have entered late, adds nothing to his qualifications for the office. Longfellow postponed a trip to Europe in order to vote for Frémont. Lowell spoke earnestly on his behalf, and Whittier begged votes in verse:

Shall we falter before what we've prayed for so long,
When the Wrong is so weak, and the Right is so strong?

Come forth all together! come old and come young,
Freedom's vote in each hand, and her song on each tongue;
Truth naked is stronger than Falsehood in mail;
The Wrong cannot prosper, and the Right cannot fail!"

In the expression of hopes and fears, execrations and exultation, the Republican press was not dependent upon verse alone. Republicans were urged to be alert.

"Slavery grasps at empire. If it is successful, henceforth its iron rule will control the policy of this nation . . . slavery will be made national and the vast free territories of the country will be closed, as by a wall of fire, against freemen."

The platform given Buchanan in the Republican press was enough to damn him even in the eyes of the Democrats. Squatter sovereignty "is a humbug, and no longer a plank in the Democratic creed." State equality meant "the right of slave holders to take their slaves into the public domain by virtue of the slave laws of the slave states." Slavery was declared to be national and freedom sectional. Kansas was to be kept out of the Union, "on the plea of the want of population, until the Free State men are murdered or driven out and the slave holders firmly planted under the protection of the general movement." And, concluding: "Any man denying the foregoing doctrine is a traitor and should be dealt with accordingly."

Frémont did "not come before the people daubed all over with partisan filth and reeking with the odor of partisan struggles for a portion of ill-gotten spoils—but presents clean hands and unblemished record." And when

election day should come "the South will feel what it never felt before—the real power of the North. We mean this in no tyrannical or odious way, but simply that they will realize our capacity, when bantered to the struggle, to outvote them and elect our candidate."⁴

⁴A popular campaign song of the day was "The White House Race":

There's an old Gray Horse whose name is Buck,
Du da, du da,
His dam was Folly and his sire Bad Luck,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

We're bound to work all night,
We're bound to work all day,
I'll bet my money on the Mustang Colt,
Will anybody bet on the Gray?

The Mustang Colt is strong and young,
Du da, du da;
His wind is sound and his knees not sprung,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

The Old Gray Horse is a well-known hack,
Du da, du da;
He's long been fed at the public rack,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

The Mustang is a full-blood colt,
Du da, du da;
He can not shy and he will not bolt,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

The Old Gray Horse when he tried to trot,
Du da, du da,
Goes round and round in the same old spot,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

These were sentiments of a frantic press addressed to Republicans on the frontier in language understood by frontiersmen. But the Democratic party had its champion and its use of invective was equally vehement.

It was time for the North to awake to the dangers of Republican principles. It was a sectional party—a “scavenger party which feeds upon the garbage of broken heads and bloody noses,” and had, “for its sole end and aim a wanton exasperation of one section . . . against the other.” The Democrats were urged to act decisively.

“Kill off Black Republicanism now” and it will never again have power to disturb the tranquillity of the country. Put it to death and no band of pestiferous politicians will ever come “forward to revive it.” Unless it was suppressed immediately it would destroy the Union “and the sacred interests involved in its existence.” There was already a serious attempt to do so. “It is more than this; a deeply laid and profoundly concerted plot.”

The Mustang goes at a killing pace,
Du da, du da;
He's bound to win in the four-mile race,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

Then do your best with the Old Gray Hack,
Du da, du da;
The Mustang Colt will clear the track,
Du da, du da day.

Chorus

We're bound to work all night,
We're bound to work all day,
I'll bet my money on the Mustang Colt,
You'd better not bet on the Gray.

To prove this assertion the writer called attention to the character of prominent men who supported Frémont and quoted some of them. There was Horace Greeley who had "co-operated with the advocates of women's rights in the same city [New York], where unsexed females have delighted in addressing mobs of men in strains of vulgar violence. And it is his associate, Fry, who, at a late meeting in Camden, New Jersey, compared John C. Frémont to Jesus Christ, and declared that he wished an earthquake would swallow up the Christian churches that did not join in the present disunion phrensy."

Another who supported Frémont was Anson Burlingame, a member of Congress from Massachusetts, who had said "we must have *an anti-slavery Constitution, an anti-slavery Bible, and an anti-slavery God.*"⁵ A minister from his pulpit in Detroit—"a fearless and faithful minister of Christ," Greeley had called him—declared:

"Before I would see popular sovereignty wrested by force from the people of the territories, I would have the plains of Kansas silent with universal death. Before I would have the lips of our Senators and Representatives sealed in craven silence by the hand of Southern violence [referring to the attack on Sumner by Brooks], I would see the halls of Congress ankle-deep in blood." And when another minister urged the sacredness of the Republican cause upon his congregation, a Democratic editor declared he had never before "heard Black Republicanism cited as synonymous with Christianity! And little did we suppose the evil tendencies of politics in the pulpit to be so appealing!" He had never expected to see the day when a minister could be "found bold and blasphemous enough

⁵ *Political Pamphlets*, No. 26.

to pluck from its sublime heights the Gospel of his Savior and christen it anew with the degrading cognomen of Frémont Republicanism."

Said Sam Houston: "I can only say that their [Republican] platform and principles are sectional, and I cannot conceive how any man, loving the Union, devoted to its principles, can support a ticket fraught with such disastrous consequences to the whole country as its success would be."

We have seen that a large number of prominent men at the North were affiliated with the Republican party. Rufus Choate was not a member of this group. "The first duty of the Whigs," said Choate, "is to unite with some organization of our country to defeat and dissolve the new geographical party calling itself Republican, . . . it is our only duty." The important question was not connected with the character of the platform or with the ability of the leader, but "by what vote can I do most to prevent the madness of the times from working its maddest act . . . the permanent foundation and the actual triumph of a party which knows one-half of America only to hate and dread it; from whose unconsecrated and revolutionary banner fifteen stars are erased or have fallen; in whose national anthem the old and endeared airs of Eutaw Springs, King's Mountain, and Yorktown, and those later of New Orleans and Buena Vista . . . breathe no more." He would not take time to enumerate "the evils which would come from the election of Republican candidates." That party's struggle for power, as the struggle was conducted by it, was mischievous to an extent incalculable.

"I appeal to the conscience and honor of my country, that if it were the aim of a great party, by every species of access to the popular mind—by eloquence, argument,

taunt, sarcasm, recrimination, appeals to pride, shame, natural rights—to prepare the nation for a struggle with Spain or England or Austria, it could not do its business more thoroughly.” And when Choate said that Buchanan represented, “more completely than any other, the sentiment of Nationality—tolerant, warm, and comprehensive—without which America is no longer America,” the editor of the *Daily Reporter* in Iowa City congratulated the party which included among its members “the Winthrops, the Clays, the Choates, the Everetts, and Irvings” But the editor claimed too much.

Occasionally a voice for Republicanism was heard in the Southern states. In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a Professor B. S. Hedrick was arraigned before the bar of public opinion for declaring his intention of voting for Frémont, and was threatened with the loss of his position in the University. We may be sure he did not enhance his prestige in the South when, in his letter of defense, he reminded North Carolina that 58,000 natives of that state were residing in free states, and that 180,000 Virginians had followed these Carolinians westward. Why, he asked, had they left the sacred precincts of slavery?

On the other hand, readers of the *New York Semi-Weekly Tribune*, and of many other Republican papers, were assured that the Democrats were in a panic. South of Mason and Dixon’s line, the states, it was said, were beginning to express resentment at the prospect of a Republican victory. But regardless of the machinations “of the petty governors of South Carolina and Mississippi” Frémont would be placed over them and would rule them.

The thought of the Pathfinder becoming President reminded one of these editors that Colonel Washington was

just forty-four years old (one should not quibble over a few months) when he was made Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the United States by his election to the presidency.

Even a "*Phrenological Journal*" of March, 1852, was quoted by the *Semi-Weekly Tribune* to prove that Frémont had all the essential qualities for leadership.

Meanwhile Robert Toombs, writing to a friend, predicted: "The election of Frémont will be the end of the Union, and ought to be. The object of Frémont's friends is the conquest of the South. I am content that they shall own us when they conquer us, but not before." And in Wheeling, Virginia, a speaker who attempted to address an audience on behalf of Frémont was interrupted, abused, and finally put in jail. In Richmond, on October 2, 1856, Henry Wise said: "Tell me, if the hoisting of a Black Republican flag in the hands of an adventurer, born illegitimately in a neighboring state, if not ill-begotten in this very city—tell me, if the hoisting of the black flag over you by a Frenchman's bastard, while the arms of civil war are already clashing, is not to be deemed an overt act and declaration of war."

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a minister was rebuked through the columns of a local paper for advising members of his congregation to vote for Frémont. "I cannot follow your advice," was the comment; "I love the Union and I have no sympathy with those who revile it. I love my family and wish to leave them under the protecting shield of my country's unrent flag. I hope I love my God, and wish to see His kingdom built up and His cause promoted through the glorious instrumentality that is at work in the Union." And the *Richmond Enquirer* was quoted as suggesting the withdrawal of the Southern

states in case of the election of Frémont. This provoked a severe arraignment of the Virginia paper in the editorial columns of the *New York Times*.

In an open letter, addressed to the friends of religion, morality, and the American Union, the writer said Frémont "is the candidate for the Presidency of conjoined fanaticisms, one of which assails all true religion, and the other of which assails the Union of the states. They go together in a body; they cannot be separated. We assert, and defy contradiction, that every organization boasting infidel doctrines is now an organization in favor of Frémont; and we assert, also, that all those desiring a dissolution of the Union are openly co-operating with those organizations."⁶

No wonder the *New York Observer* exclaimed: "It is the most fearful struggle that has been known since we became a free people! Never before were such issues; never such threatening declarations; never such preparations made" Or that the *Springfield Republican* in an editorial on November 4 should assert in more solemn phrases: "It is natural to exaggerate the present at the expense of the past; but viewed aright, there has not been, since our government was organized, so momentous an election as that which excites the nation from its circumference today. The issue relates not to measures, but to principles, not to questions of dollars and cents, but to those eternal questions of right and wrong."

On the same day the *New York Daily Times* declared: "The next twelve hours decides the fate of the country, and fixes its policy, foreign and domestic, for years to come." And prayerfully another wrote:

⁶ *Political Pamphlets*, No. 26.

Desolate and bleak November !
On thy drapery cold and gray,
Gleams of tender sunlight soften.
Oh, be merciful, we pray !

We have feared thee—wished not for thee—
Many a year of thoughtless life.
Now, with anxious prayer we wait thee,
Arbiter in this great strife.

Let us bless thee ; let us love thee !
Let us ever after say,
Desolate and bleak November,
Thou wert merciful that day !

In far-off California, meanwhile, the *Evening Bulletin* of San Francisco, in its editorials, was ridiculing the idea of disunion. The Union was too strong to be affected by the election of either candidate. Union spirit was "limited in its operation by no party, and sadly as we say it, party action manifests little of its influence."

The casual observer, touring the North and West during the summer and fall of 1856, very probably would have predicted the election of Frémont. Many things, thrown to the surface by public opinion, would have justified him in forming such a conclusion. There was a jauntiness in the self-confidence of the Republicans, here and there. Numerous clubs were formed, some of them with luxurious lounging accommodations bespeaking heavy expenditure. The rallying proclivities of the Republicans seemed to have been inherited from the Whigs of 1840. Newspapers ! Republican newspapers multiplied like the proverbial mushroom, if we accept some contemporary reports.

The general interest in the presidential election in California was not great, and yet the San Francisco *California*

Chronicle, on October 25, gave the names of eighteen Republican newspapers in that state, seventeen of which had been established during the preceding three months. The large number of straw votes taken on trains, in hotels, in shops, on board boats, at parties, and at other places revealed large majorities for Frémont. The state election returns—Maine, Vermont, Ohio—encouraged the Republicans. Even Pennsylvania, one of the doubtful states, was lost to the Republicans by only 3,000 votes out of a total of over 400,000.

These were surface conditions, however, which did not blind the more thoughtful. Alarms and warnings were issued frequently. "We do not wish our readers to believe the election of Frémont a fixed fact. We do not, ourselves, believe it and should not desire to spread the information if we did. We wish it understood that the result depends on work yet to be done." And this was typical of the sober-minded in the Republican party.

In its predictions made prior to the election the *Springfield Republican* had pointed out that the slave states would cast 120 electoral votes and the free states 176. It would require 149 to elect a president. The doubtful states, with the number of electoral votes cast by each, were Pennsylvania, 27; Indiana, 13; New Jersey, 7; California, 4. Frémont, it was asserted, would carry New York (35), Ohio (23), Illinois (11), Michigan (6), Iowa (4), Maine (8), New Hampshire (5), Vermont (5), Massachusetts (13), Rhode Island (4), Connecticut (6), and Wisconsin (5). With the exception of Illinois, all of these states given to Frémont as early as October 18 cast their electoral vote for him in the election. All of those states listed as doubtful by the Republicans went to Buchanan. The final count gave 174 electoral

votes to Buchanan, 114 to Frémont, and 8 to Fillmore. The corresponding popular vote was 1,838,169; 1,341,264; and 874,534.

The *Springfield Republican* for November 5 admitted defeat, but predicted a victory for its party in 1860, with Frémont as the successful candidate.

No one can say whether or not another—Seward, for example—could have won the election of 1856. Perhaps no leader in the Republican party could have polled a larger number of votes than Frémont. The issues were of more importance than the candidates in that election, and they were such as would have placed a halo about the head of almost any prominent leader chosen. Among the issues, Kansas loomed large, and among the leaders, perhaps Frémont met the physical demands as well as another would have. Kansas owed its prominence to one thing: it happened to be the place chosen by slavery for contesting its right to march westward side by side with freedom. Frémont owed his vantage of leadership to another thing: his name was intimately associated with the West, into which slavery insisted upon accompanying freedom, and he was in sympathy with the latter.

XII. CIVIL WAR AND FRAUDULENT CONTRACTS

Following the campaign, Mrs. Frémont and the children sailed to France for rest and recreation, and the Colonel journeyed to California to attend to business problems which had piled up during his absence. Almost immediately they were summoned back to New York by the illness of Senator Benton. He died in April, 1858, but neither his daughter nor his son-in-law was with him. They had left New York again for California before the end came. Urgent business, it was claimed, demanded the Colonel's presence in the Far West.

The relations between Mrs. Frémont and her father had been so cordial that her departure at such a time seems inexplicable. Benton had not been friendly to Frémont's campaign and had voted against him in 1856, but if there had been any rift in the family ties because of the Senator's attitude, it must have been too insignificant to attract attention.

Frémont had scarcely established his family in a comfortable home near the mines at Mariposa when trouble broke out. The discontented element on the estate had been suppressed so long that it needed but a slight excuse to flare up. The outbreak, which came to be known as the "Mariposa war," occurred a few weeks after the Frémonts arrived, but there was no bloodshed and the affair passed quickly, with Frémont still in possession of his claims.

The "Mariposa war" may have been a factor in persuading Frémont to move his family out of the mining area. San Francisco and its environment had always held

strong attractions for them, and about this time he bought Black Point. This was a tongue of land containing about thirteen acres and situated on the southernmost of the two peninsulas forming the entrance to San Francisco Bay, and affording rare and wonderful panoramas toward the west, north, and east, as the eye swept around from the Golden Gate and the Pacific to Tamalpais and the foothills of the Coast Range, backed by the distant Sierra Nevada Mountains.

And here he built a home. It was something like the dream place to which he had looked forward during those days following the fourth expedition when he was convalescing under the thoughtful care of Carson—a time when he formed mental “pictures of the happy home we are to have,” with its library and huge fireplace and “large windows looking out upon the sea”

Later, when the Civil War broke out, the United States government took this and the adjacent land for fortresses. Frémont and his heirs have been unable to establish a clear title, although the heirs have carried the struggle for compensation down to the present time.

In this home, with its outlook through the Golden Gate, the Frémonts spent many happy days, and perhaps there is no place associated with the “Pathfinder” which should have greater historic interest for Californians than Black Point. The guests who assembled there, on occasions, were later prominent in the history and literature of the Pacific Coast and of the nation. Among these were Thomas Starr King and Bret Harte.

How much the ultimate success of the latter was due to Mrs. Frémont cannot be determined, but unquestionably she gave him great confidence in his own ability and assisted him in finding publishers for his early produc-

tions. On one occasion she secured a government appointment for him and received a note expressing his deep gratitude. "I shall no longer disquiet myself about changes in residence or anything else, for I believe if I were cast upon a desert island, a savage would come to me next morning and hand me a three-cornered note to say that I had been appointed governor at Mrs. Frémont's request, at \$2,400 a year."¹

But life was a changing experience for the Frémonts, and even during the period of greatest prosperity there was invariably an economic problem inviting or demanding attention. Black Point was something of a luxury and Mariposa needed developing. The family was ever prodigal and thoughtless in money matters and frequently the checking account was not adequate to the demands made upon it. Once more Frémont went to France to raise money and he was in the midst of these attempts when the Civil War began.

On a morning in May, 1861, he had breakfast with a small group of Union sympathizers in Paris. The war formed the principal topic of discussion and Frémont was asked to speak. What he said on that occasion is not known, except that he regretted that war had come and expressed, in a "quiet, modest" way, his faith in the ultimate triumph of "truth and justice." Ostensibly he was in Paris to dispose of a part of his Mariposa estate, but he turned his attention to public interests which did not come under his personal jurisdiction at all. After some negotiations in France he crossed the Channel to England, and began to buy arms and supplies for the United States Army, persuading Charles Francis Adams, American min-

¹ Quoted in Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 529. See Henry Childs Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte* (1911), chap. iv, particularly pp. 34-35.

ister to England, to give semi-official approval for what he did. On May 24, 1861, he wrote F. P. Blair, informing him of his action.

ATHENEUM CLUB, LONDON, 24 May, '61

MY DEAR SIR:

I had fully intended to sail for New York on the Asia tomorrow but under all the information that I can obtain I judge that a supply of efficient arms would be valuable to our cause just now, and I have decided to remain a short time longer with the object of bringing them with me. I have succeeded in procuring the control of funds sufficient to purchase three or four batteries of guns fully equipped for the field and perhaps 10,000 rifles. The guns will be of the most approved construction and will be accompanied with carriages, shot, shell, etc. The difficulty is in having the guns cast, ammunition got ready, etc., within the few weeks that I can bring myself to remain here. I shall have an answer before night and if I get these in time will advise you. I trust that you have already offered my services to the President. If not, pray do so and in either case explain to him the cause of my delay. I think that this delay is justifiable if it enables me to come prepared with an equipment of all arms, and of the most efficient kind, sufficient to put a force of ten thousand men directly in the face of the enemy. Pray don't let these few weeks operate prejudicially to me. My great desire is to serve the country in the most direct and effective way that possibly I can. From all that I can see I judge that there will be need for our best services. The agents for the Seceders are very active here. The last steamer brought them an accession of credit and they completed yesterday the purchase of two screw steamers (one for seventy-five thousand pounds) and are contracting for more. These steamers are to start from Liverpool and are to endeavor to enter the port of Charleston. They are to be under English colors, are not to carry any contraband of war and will probably be underwritten here. The former owners were yesterday endeavoring to obtain underwriters. I will try to let you know the names, captains, underwriters, when to sail, etc., etc. Meantime I will let Sandford (Belgium), who is here, know of this, and also Mr.

Adams if I see him today. Mr. Sandford is an admirable representative, and Mr. Adams in this respect more than justifies his good old name. Love to all the family.

Yours truly,

[Signed] J. C. FRÉMONT

F. P. BLAIR, Esq.
SILVER SPRINGS

[Over]

The Government here, I learn today, has given explicit orders that not a gun (Government arms) shall be permitted to me, not even an old gun recast, without it clearly knows that it is not for our use. Quite a large number of sailors are going to Liverpool to remain there inactive at the charge of the Crimps [?], and my information is to the effect that they are for privateer service or perhaps to man the new men of war which the Seceders are purchasing.

Napoleon, I think, is more likely to [be] friendly to us—that is the effect of his conduct will be—and not injure us. At present privateers and war vessels will go out from these ports, which will be open to receive the prizes taken from us and to protect them until the Adjudication of them are made in the port and by the Courts of the Seceders. This is a singular kind of neutrality exercised against a nation contending with rebellious subjects.²

This letter shows he did not know that he had been appointed major-general in the United States Army. He was not aware of holding an official position of any kind, but the business of purchasing supplies he prosecuted with vigor. When it became necessary to pledge his own credit he did it, and on the morning of June 28 the *Boston Transcript* announced that Frémont had arrived the preceding day with a “large assortment of valuable arms for the government.”

² MS in the Huntington Library. See also Fred Albert Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army* (Cleveland, 1928), Vol. I, pp. 114–115.

Frémont went to Washington for a conference with President Lincoln. While he had heard of his appointment by this time he did not know to what position in the field he would be assigned. Probably he preferred a command in the West. On July 6 the government announced that the state of Illinois and the territory west of the Mississippi and east of the Rocky Mountains, including New Mexico, had been organized as a separate military command under Major-General Frémont. Kentucky might be added later. For two or three weeks after his visit to Washington the Major-General examined guns and supplies for his army in the West. He was later accused of deliberately postponing his departure. At any rate, it was July 25 when he reached St. Louis to take charge of his new post.

Union influence was in the ascendancy in Missouri at the time of Frémont's arrival. The state legislature had met at Jefferson City on December 31, 1860, ten days after South Carolina had passed an ordinance of secession. On January 4, following, Claiborne F. Jackson, called a Douglas Democrat, was inaugurated governor. He came to office firmly convinced that the slave-holding states had a common destiny and that the North must recognize this. "If the Northern States have determined to put the slave-holding states on a footing of inequality," he said, "then they have themselves practically abandoned the Union and will not expect our submission to a government on terms of inequality and subordination" While he hoped an adjustment could be made, he took the position that the South would receive, rather than make, concessions. A little later the legislature provided for the election of delegates to a convention "to consider the then existing relations between the government of the United States,

the people and government of different states, the government and people of the State of Missouri; and to adopt such measures for vindicating the sovereignty of the state and the protection of its institutions as shall appear to them to be demanded."

Lincoln appreciated the complicated situation in Missouri, so far as it affected the Union cause, more fully than anyone else, and in a letter written later, October 5, 1863, described so accurately conditions applicable to this early period that it deserves quoting in part: "We are in civil war. In such cases there always is a main question; but in this case that question is a perplexing compound—Union and Slavery. It thus becomes a question, not of two sides merely, but of at least four sides, even among those who are for the Union, saying nothing of those who are against it. Thus, those who are for the Union *with*, but not *without* slavery; those for it *without*, but not *with*; those for it *with* or *without*, but prefer it *with*; and those for it *with* or *without*, but prefer it *without*. Among these again is a subdivision of those who are for *gradual* but not for *immediate*, and those who are for *immediate*, but not for *gradual* extinction of slavery. It is easy to conceive that all these shades of opinion, and even more, may be sincerely entertained by honest and truthful men. Yet, all being for the Union, by reason of these differences each will prefer a different way of sustaining the Union. At once sincerity is questioned, and motives are assailed. Actual war coming, blood grows hot, and blood is spilled. Thought is forced from old channels into confusion. Deception breeds and thrives. Confidence dies and universal suspicion reigns. Each man feels an impulse to kill his neighbor, lest he be first killed by him. Revenge and retaliation follow. And all this, as before said, may

be among honest men only. But this is not all. Every foul bird comes abroad and every dirty reptile rises up. These add crime to confusion."³

The election revealed a strong objection to secession. St. Louis County gave 5,000 majority to the Unconditional Union ticket. Indeed, the two parties in the Convention were known as the Unconditional Union men and the Conditional Union men. The state, as a whole, indicated a majority of 80,000 for the Union cause.⁴ Even slave-owners in the Convention spoke vigorously against seceding. "I am willing to go as far as any living man to protect the institution of slavery in the state of Missouri. I have no prejudice against the institution, I am a slave-owner myself; but I am not willing to sacrifice other interests to the slave interests, or say that it is the peculiar institution of Missouri, when we know that it is not." These comments by James O. Broadhead indicated the reluctance, even among slave-owners in Missouri, to sever relations with the Union. The Convention completed its work on March 22, and adjourned subject to call by the executive committee when that body should consider such a move necessary. Six days later the state legislature adjourned to be reconvened by the Governor on May 2.

During April there was some quiet sparring for advantage among the Unconditional Union men and the leaders of secession. General Nathaniel Lyon, an aggressive and somewhat tactless supporter of the Union

³ John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, X, 221.

⁴ Samuel B. Harding, "Missouri Party Struggle in the Civil War Period," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (1900), I, 87-103.

cause, had been ordered from Fort Riley, in Kansas, to St. Louis. There he found a kindred spirit in Frank P. Blair. To possess themselves of the arsenal in that city was a part of their program and they accomplished it without much difficulty. By the beginning of May they were ready for another move.

Upon the command of the Governor, the militia had been ordered into camps at various places throughout the state. One of these was in St. Louis, and, in honor of the Governor, was called Camp Jackson. There were only about 700 militiamen in the camp, and Lyon decided to take it. This he did on May 10, and thereby brought things to a crisis in St. Louis and in the state. For over a week the legislature had been discussing a bill to enroll all able-bodied men in the militia and it passed within fifteen minutes after news of the capture of the camp reached Jefferson City. As a result of these things Conditional Union men joined the secessionists.

Each succeeding week saw the issue more sharply drawn. On June 12, at the Planters House in St. Louis, occurred a long interview between Jackson and Lyon. It was the final attempt to bring the factions together, and it failed. "Rather than concede to the state of Missouri the right to demand that my government shall not enlist troops within her limits," shouted Lyon, "or bring troops at its own will into, out of, or through the state; rather than concede to the state of Missouri for one single instant the right to dictate to my government in any matter, however unimportant, I would [rising as he said this, and pointing to every man in the room] see you, and you, and you, and every man and woman and child in the state dead and buried."

"This means war," he said, turning to the Governor.

"In an hour one of my officers will call for you and conduct you out of my lines,"⁵ after which he strode from the room, the rowels of his long spurs rattling against the floor and his sword clanking at his side.

Jackson hurried back to the capital and prepared for the contest by announcing the result of the interview through a proclamation and calling for 50,000 militiamen to repel an impending invasion. As Lyon was approaching Jefferson City with his forces, Jackson did not wait for a response to his call. The federal troops occupied the capital. Meanwhile Jackson moved to Booneville, and Lyon followed him. There, on June 18, the "Battle of Booneville" occurred. This engagement dampened the ardor of Southern sympathizers. As the secessionists moved south the Union troops followed. The first check to the triumph of the Union cause came with the defeat of Sigel at Carthage, early in July. Lyon reached Springfield about July 13. His forces were small and the term of enlistment for half of them was about to expire. He found himself facing an enemy that had been moving toward its own reinforcements and supplies while his troops were separating themselves from theirs. In the midst of this situation came news that the battle of Bull Run, fought on July 21, had resulted in a victory for the South. This was the condition on July 25 when Frémont reached St. Louis.

While the Union party was discouraged the situation was by no means as bad as it had appeared. After all, the state was almost completely under the control of the Blair-Lyon group. Frémont's arrival gave encouragement to the community, and a more experienced commander

⁵ Samuel B. Harding, *op. cit.*, p. 95; also Eugene Morrow Violette, *A History of Missouri*, p. 353.

would have found means of restoring all the old confidence.

In his manuscript *Memoirs* Frémont says that his plan of campaign—which was to clear Missouri of secessionists and descend the Mississippi for an attack on Memphis—had been discussed with Lincoln, and that the President had given him *carte blanche*, saying: “You must use your own judgment and do the best you can.” Here was a chance to earn success.

Messengers from Lyon, with appealing entreaties for aid, were awaiting Frémont when he arrived in St. Louis. Even a thousand or two fresh troops, added to Lyon’s little army, would have given new courage and probable victory in the engagement pending. Frémont was assured that Lyon would fight anyway, but is said to have replied to the messenger giving him the information: “If he does, he will do it upon his own responsibility.”⁶

There was another call for help which Frémont believed deserved first consideration. This was from Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio River. The strategic position of this little town was obvious, and Frémont directed all his energies to relieving it. Probably the seriousness of the situation at Springfield had not impressed him yet, and he could not direct his attention energetically to more than one problem at a time.

A week was spent organizing an expedition of 3,800 men, collecting supplies and guns, and chartering steamboats to relieve Cairo. Frémont led the expedition himself, and it was carried out with all the *éclat* that proud officer loved to stage on occasions. The arrival of these reinforcements undoubtedly brought to Cairo relief and courage.

⁶ Thomas L. Snead, *The Fight for Missouri* (1886), p. 253.

But the success of Frémont's work in the West required him to give to Lyon's appeals something more than advice to retreat. Lyon was not accustomed to retreat. That doughty commander was popular in the West, had been largely responsible for such success as the Union cause had experienced in Missouri, and was a warm, personal friend of Frank P. Blair, Jr. For the sake of the cause Frémont should have endeavored to send relief to Springfield more promptly. On August 4 he ordered Stevenson's regiment from Booneville and Montgomery's from Leavenworth to Springfield. If the order had gone a week earlier, it might have saved the day in southwest Missouri.

For ten days, August 1 to 10, Lyon maneuvered his small force of 5,500 men about Springfield, trying to prevent his opponents from uniting, and hoping for reinforcements. His situation became more desperate with each passing day. On August 9 he determined to strike, and arranged for an attack. "I find my position extremely embarrassing," he wrote Frémont at that time, "and am at present unable to determine whether I shall be able to maintain my ground, or be forced to retire. I can resist any attack from the front, but, if the enemy were to surround me, I must retire. I shall hold my ground as long as possible, though I may, without knowing how far, endanger the safety of my entire force, with its valuable materials, being induced, by the important considerations involved, to take this step."⁷

He did not know that his opponents, McCulloch and Price, had on that same evening decided to attack him. The armies came together in the early morning of the tenth on the banks of a little stream called Wilson's Creek,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

about ten miles southwest of Springfield. It was a desperate struggle in which Lyon threw his own life away. He deserves censure rather than praise for his rashness on this occasion, because he deliberately placed himself in the path of inevitable destruction.

The battle of Wilson's Creek, with the loss of Lyon, brought gloom to Missouri and aroused Frémont to a realization of his error. He had been in charge of the Department of the West for a fortnight. Besides leading an expedition against Cairo he had done little when the news reached him on August 13, and the reaction which this brought was marked. On that day he informed the Assistant Adjutant-General at Washington of Lyon's defeat and death, and panicky demands for aid, nearly a dozen of them, were sent out by the Major-General from St. Louis to the Secretary of War, urging him to let the Governors of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri send all available troops; to the President, pleading with him to "read my urgent dispatch to the Secretary of War"; and to Montgomery Blair, making the same request and imploring him to utilize every possible source for immediate relief by sending reinforcements. Dispatches were sent also to the Governors of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Iowa demanding troops. "Severe engagement near Springfield reported; General Lyon killed; Sigel retreating in good order on Rolla. Send forthwith all disposable force you have, arming them as you best can for the moment. Use utmost dispatch." On the following day, August 14, the Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, sent the following telegraphic reply:

Your message to President read. Positive orders were given yesterday to Governor Dennison, and to Governors of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, to send all their organized forces, with

full supply of artillery and small arms. Governor Dennison replies: "The Groesbeck regiment will be promptly forwarded."

This was followed on the fifteenth by a telegram from President Lincoln:

Been answering your messages ever since day before yesterday. Do you receive the answers? The War Department has notified all the Governors you designate to forward all available forces. So telegraphed you. Have you received these messages? Answer immediately.

And the next day Montgomery Blair wired:

Every available man and all the money in the public chest have been sent. We will send more money immediately, our financial arrangements at New York having been perfected. Let our fellows cheer up. All will be well.⁸

At exorbitant rates contracts were let to fortify the city (of which a further account is given below), and a dispatch, closing a deal for guns, was sent off hurriedly. Evidently Frémont was desperately afraid the Confederate troops would push an attack on St. Louis. He did not know how much their victory had subtracted from their ambition to do battle.

Price and McCulloch had every opportunity to destroy completely the remnant of Lyon's little army before it could reach Rolla, the southern terminus of the railroad connecting that section with St. Louis, but McCulloch would not co-operate with Price. Indeed, he withdrew to northern Arkansas and left Price to handle the problem in

⁸ These messages of the thirteenth and fourteenth of August, 1861, are given in "Reports of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War" in *Senate Reports, No. 108*, 37th Congress, Third Session, Part III, pp. 108-113. They are also quoted in James Peckham, *General Nathaniel Lyon, and Missouri in 1861, A Monograph of the Great Rebellion* (1866), pp. 342-345.

Missouri. The subsequent failure of the latter was due, very probably, to his inability to follow up his advantage at that time.

Heavy reinforcements joined Price as a result of his success at Wilson's Creek, and he determined to march northward with them and regain control of the Missouri River. He left Springfield August 25, directing his march toward Lexington, halting before that town with his advance guard on September 13. This army was reported to be about 15,000 strong. Colonel Mulligan, who commanded the Union troops, had about 3,000. The latter moved to a hill overlooking the river, dug in, and sent an appeal to Frémont for help. Had the request been answered promptly, reinforcements might have reached Mulligan in time to save the day, as Price rested his troops five or six days before attacking. But they arrived too late, and the battle of Lexington resulted in the surrender of Mulligan on September 21. This brought additional recruits to Price's army, but he was not able to maintain his position, and on September 30 he retreated to the southern part of the state.

Frémont was still under the influence of the news of August 13. But his equilibrium was disturbed further by criticisms which were beginning to reach his office in the Brant House. He was evidently working hard along some lines to overcome the difficulties that had developed, but in doing so he was utterly insensible—indeed, he was unable to comprehend—the positive blunders he made in other fields.

On the night of August 29 he worked until daybreak next morning on a proclamation emancipating the slaves in Missouri, and issued it immediately; this, at a time when Lincoln was using all his tact to gain that strong middle

group in Missouri which would enable him to win the state for the Union.

In the midst of these cumulative irregularities and worries came Frémont's quarrel with Frank Blair. Doubtless the unfortunate events of the past two months were largely responsible for it. Blair had been Frémont's warm friend, but he had been an intimate friend of Lyon's as well, and there is reason to believe he began to lose confidence in Frémont just after Lyon's death. At any rate, late in August, when General John M. Schofield and Blair left the Brant House following a conference with Frémont, both were convinced that he was not qualified to cope with the situation in Missouri. Blair began to express this view in letters to members of his family and friends in Washington. The breach was widened when Montgomery Blair and his brother-in-law, M. C. Meigs, were sent to St. Louis by Lincoln in September to make an investigation of things there. The report they made indicated serious mismanagement in the Western Department, but probably they did not know then just how serious it was.

These things disturbed and annoyed the General, and Mrs. Frémont also felt the strain. They decided something might be gained by a personal interview with Lincoln, and Mrs. Frémont went to Washington. She arrived late in the evening of September 10, 1861, and immediately sent her card from her hotel with a request to know when she might deliver a letter to the President. She said that he invited her to come right away. The meeting was unfortunate. She was tired and nervous from worry and from two wearing days of train travel, and Lincoln was smarting under Frémont's usurpation of authority in Missouri. Any supposed injury to her husband always aroused Mrs. Frémont's resentment and it was always

magnified by reflection. Probably her memory of the meeting as given in her *Memoirs* was distorted still more by the time she wrote it down. Anyway, according to that account, she came from the interview feeling that Lincoln had been discourteous to her and that he had decided to dismiss her husband. In the latter conclusion she was probably right, for the dismissal came a few weeks later.

After Mrs. Frémont left for Washington the General committed another of his many injudicious acts. He arrested Frank Blair for "insidious and dishonorable efforts to bring my authority into contempt with the government and to undermine my influence as an officer." Blair was soon released, but the damage had been done.

Meanwhile news of Price's retreat reached St. Louis. Frémont had at last started an army of 20,000 men toward Springfield to protect the legislature, which had been called by Jackson to meet at Neosho on October 21. Price's movement was to avoid Frémont and to get into closer communication with McCulloch.

A provisional government had been established in Missouri by the Union sympathizers. The State Convention, which had adjourned March 22, was reconvened by order of the Executive Committee. It met in Jefferson City, July 22, and declared the state offices vacant. Hamilton R. Garland and Willard P. Hall were elected governor and lieutenant-governor, respectively, and arrangements were made for the election of a new legislature. As a result, a provisional government was set up with headquarters at St. Louis. Jackson, however, continued to struggle for the mastery. The legislature which he had called at Neosho contained but a fraction of the original body, yet it passed an act declaring that Missouri had seceded from

the Union, and it elected senators and representatives to the Confederate Congress.⁹

In the military field, Frémont was earnestly endeavoring to retrieve the lost prestige of the Union cause in Missouri. By the last of October he had collected a force of 35,000 or 40,000 at Springfield, and had developed plans which he hoped to carry out. The first thing was to destroy or capture Price's forces. The next act would be to move against Little Rock and Memphis. Finally, he would descend the Mississippi and occupy New Orleans.

Fortunately these impractical dreams of his were not to be carried out. His appointment had been a mistake, and his dismissal was essential to the good of the cause.

It has been asserted that Frémont took precautions to protect himself against a recall by issuing orders to refuse admission to messengers. If so, the one who bore the order successfully passed the guards by employing a clever stratagem, and on November 2, 1861, while Frémont was perfecting plans to destroy a non-existent enemy, he found himself relieved of his command.

For his own reputation this may have been a fortunate thing. His recall provoked a perfect furor of opposition in Missouri and among certain groups of people in the North. They were able to say that he was demoted at a time when he was about to do important things for the West. It also enabled him to go out in the midst of the sincere affection of his soldiers. In brief, it made a popular martyr of him.

General Hunter was appointed to command in the Department of the West. Following directions which he had

⁹ Eugene Morrow Violette, *A History of Missouri*, pp. 368-369. Chapters xv-xx give a good account of the Civil War in Missouri.

received from Washington, he ordered a retreat of the Union forces to Rolla and Sedalia. This relieved Price in the southwest, and for the next three months that officer moved through the country around Springfield unmolested.

Meanwhile Frémont returned to St. Louis. He spent several days there, collecting materials for his defense, a business in which he was more skilful than in commanding armies in the field. From St. Louis he went to New York, accompanied by his wife. In that city he found himself the idol of government officials and prominent radicals. The complete dominance of emotion over judgment was revealed in a comparison drawn by Henry Ward Beecher in a sermon preached to the congregation of Plymouth Church and to which Frémont had received a special invitation. Having condemned Daniel Webster as a statesman who had compromised with slavery he added: "He died and is *dead*," and turning to Frémont, "but your name will live and be remembered by a nation of freemen."

From New York Frémont went to Washington to defend his management of the Western Department. The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War from both Houses of Congress was in charge of the investigation. This committee was composed of six members: B. F. Wade, Chairman; Z. Chandler, John Covode, George W. Julian, D. W. Gooch, and M. F. Odell. The first four were particularly friendly to Frémont. The examination of witnesses was begun on January 9, 1862, and ended on March 17. The report of the Joint Committee, including both the testimony and the letters and papers submitted by different witnesses, covers 279 pages, Frémont's and accompanying papers alone covering 121 of the total. The

Committee concluded its report with the following declaration:

The administration of General Frémont was eminently characterized by earnestness, ability, and the most unquestionable loyalty. In the exercise of the almost unlimited power delegated to him, there was no evidence of any tenderness toward treason, or any failure to fully assert the dignity and power of that government of which he was the representative. The manner in which that power was exercised was to be judged by results, and the policy of continuing him in command was a matter for the authorities above him to determine.

In order to pronounce a final judgment upon all the affairs in the Western Department, much more information is necessary than is in the possession of your Committee. They have undertaken merely to state what seems to be borne out by such testimony as they have been able to obtain.

This was signed by four members of the Committee, those friendly to Frémont. The other two, Gooch and Odell, refused to subscribe to the finding of the majority, but submitted the following brief statement:

As the testimony which the Committee submit in relation to the Western Department is so incomplete, the testimony of so many witnesses deemed material by the whole Committee being wanting, the undersigned decline to concur in the above report, and for themselves prefer to submit the testimony without comment.¹⁰

In the meantime the House of Representatives already had begun investigations on its own account. When the

¹⁰ "Reports of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War" in *Senate Reports, No. 108*, 37th Congress, Third Session, Part III, p. 6. General L. T. Thomas' report to Secretary of War Cameron, October 21, 1861, made in St. Louis after investigations ordered by the War Department, condemns Frémont's administration very strongly (see pp. 7-16).

extra session of Congress met in 1861, public officials were receiving a good deal of criticism because of the part they were taking in distributing Army contracts. Upon motion of Charles H. Van Wyck of New York, the Speaker appointed a committee to investigate the charges. Van Wyck was placed at the head of this body, and other members were Elihu B. Washburne of Illinois, William S. Holman of Indiana, Reuben E. Fenton of New York, Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, William G. Steele of New Jersey, and James S. Jackson of Kentucky.

This committee visited various parts of the country and held sessions almost continuously from July, 1861, to July 10, 1862. Its hundreds of witnesses were examined under oath. Its investigations were carried on in the sections where the irregularities were reported. It collected nearly twenty-eight hundred pages of evidence, which it submitted to Congress in two large volumes.¹¹ Among others it investigated the management of the Department of the West by General John Charles Frémont, and its report shows that that official was both incompetent and unscrupulous.

The city of Cincinnati was not within Frémont's jurisdiction, but he sent Major R. M. Corwine there to enlist recruits and purchase supplies. Corwine's agents bought horses in that section at prices averaging \$25 a head more than the amounts paid by local agents, although the animals were similar and were to be used for the same general purpose.¹²

But this was trivial compared with the frauds practiced

¹¹ *House Reports*, 37th Congress, Second Session; see also Fred Albert Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865*, I, 58-65.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. xxxiii-xxxviii.

in and around St. Louis. Men found it profitable to abandon other pursuits and devote all their time to buying horses to sell to the government. Profits were increased through resort to tricks. Horses originally branded for the cavalry at \$119 were rebranded as artillery horses at \$150 each. In October, 1861, a board of survey found only seventy-six out of four hundred and eleven cavalry horses sent out from St. Louis fit for service. Five were dead and three hundred and thirty undersized, under or over age, stifled, ringboned, blind, sprained, and incurably unfit for any public service. These same horses cost the government eleven dollars each more than the maximum of \$119.¹³

The same type of graft was used in the purchase of cattle, "and when a conscientious officer refused to pass cattle not in accordance with the contracts, he was in effect superseded by one who had no conscientious scruples in the matter, and cattle that were rejected by his predecessor were at once accepted."¹⁴

More startling instances of fraud were practiced in the purchase of guns. A consignment of 25,000 Austrian muskets—guns which were worthless cast-offs—was purchased for \$166,000, and this sum was a total loss to the government. On another occasion Frémont purchased 5,000 Hall carbines through Simon Stevens of Pennsylvania. The Ordnance Bureau of the War Department had sold them in June, 1861, to Arthur M. Eastman of Manchester, New Hampshire, at three dollars and a half each. Eastman had altered them at a cost of seventy-five cents to a dollar and a quarter each, sold them to Stevens at

¹³ *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 83-88, 99.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

\$12.50 each, and Stevens sold them immediately to Frémont at \$25 each. The War Department had sold these arms, which should never have been sold, and in six weeks had bought them back through Frémont at more than six times their sale price.¹⁵

Mrs. Frémont's friends in St. Louis made her a present of horses and a carriage. Toward the payment for this generous gift a man by the name of Fox contributed \$300. But he could afford to do it. His firm, Child, Pratt and Fox, furnished ordinary army supplies to Frémont in 1861 to the amount of \$800,000 without the price of a single article being previously determined. The book-keeper testified that the profit was about forty per cent. Although the law required that contracts should be let only after advertisements for bids had been made, Frémont, "either through corrupt motives, or from want of reasonable prudence," disregarded the law.¹⁶

But perhaps the most astounding fraud was that connected with fortifying the city of St. Louis. Upon the order of Frémont, General Justus McKinstry gave E. L. Beard the contract after the fortifications were practically completed. Indeed Beard actually received \$151,000 for the work between August 29 and September 6, 1861, three or four weeks before the contract was let, and he received the last installment on October 23, just eight days after the date of the agreement. All the money was paid by direct order of Frémont, except the first \$10,000, and that was paid by an indirect order. Practically all the \$171,000 was profit, because the actual cost of at least half of the fortifications was paid from a separate fund.

¹⁵ Shannon, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-41.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102, 112-113.

Upon the most generous allowance Beard spent not over \$60,000, leaving a balance of \$111,000 profit, this despite the interference of Major Allen, the Quartermaster, who, through his vigilance, prevented the expenditure of another \$60,000. "Every dollar of this money was diverted from funds intended for other purposes—namely the subsisting, clothing, and transporting of troops." The use of the money was "in utter contempt of all law and of army regulations, as well as in defiance of superior authority, diverted from its lawful purpose," and turned over to Beard.¹⁷

When the Joint Committee of the two Houses of Congress completed the examination of Frémont, it requested him to give no information to anyone regarding his testimony before that body. Ignoring this request, he gave his statement and dispatches to the press, and on March 4, 1862, the *New York Daily Tribune* published them on a full extra sheet, and included a long editorial on his behalf. By this act Frémont opened himself to a new attack, and he was severely criticized by his opponents. Even his friend, Colfax, regretted "very much" that the evidence had been published. "But," he said by way of apology, "I think that something ought to be pardoned to a man who had poisoned arrows hurled against him from every side, and who has been deposed from his command under circumstances so painful and trying." Colfax did not have the evidence of the House Committee.

The attack on Frémont in Congress was led by Frank Blair. As we have seen already he had been an intimate friend and supporter of Frémont at the time the latter was appointed to a command. In fact it was due to the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-79.

influence of the Blairs very largely that the appointment had been made. The friendship continued for some time after Frémont's arrival at St. Louis. Then came the break. Perhaps the responsibility for it rests more heavily upon Frémont than upon Blair. The latter's arrest by Frémont left a strong personal prejudice which runs red throughout the Blair attack. But his charges are not to be dismissed *in toto* on account of this. If one is to throw out evidence because it comes from prejudiced sources, practically all the evidence pertaining to Frémont would have to be discarded. Most certainly the family papers would be thrown overboard. Perhaps Blair makes some charges which are difficult to sustain and he may interpret others erroneously. The rebuke by Colfax may be just: "He [Blair] has seen fit to mingle personalities with his criticisms, and to speak of a gentleman [Frémont] who holds a commission as a major-general in the army as a tool, a dupe, a designing man." But there was a good deal of evidence collected by the House Committee which lends credence to Blair's charges.

And there are things to be considered which are not found in the Committee reports. One may admit that some of the charges made against Frémont were greatly exaggerated, and that he did some constructive work during the "hundred days" he commanded in the West, even if it was performed at an enormous cost. There can be little doubt that his enemies were sometimes unfair in the indictments they drew up, just as his friends were equally extravagant in the claims they made. The fact remains that he failed to convince the government at Washington of his ability to master the problems of his department. It is the more significant that this should occur at a time when he had as his chief the most tolerant and patient

President this country has ever elected, and at a time when, according to his own testimony, he had been given unrestricted authority to work out his difficulties in his own way. As a reason for not doing more, he excused himself by asserting his inability to secure resources. But the entire government was handicapped in this way. The time called for men who could force success with such resources as were available. This Frémont could not or at least did not do. He surrounded himself with foreign leaders, exclusive habits, and unnecessary red tape. While he denied it and presented witnesses to support his denials, the weight of evidence seems to prove that he maintained a haughty reserve on occasions when a more tactful leader would have avoided all grounds for such a charge. His emancipation proclamation was an exercise of authority which any judicious leader would have refused to assume. His arrest of Frank Blair (in the middle of September, 1861) was nothing less than a blunder, and contributed generously to his own downfall. In the face of evidence piled up by the Committee of the House of Representatives it seems that even his staunchest supporters must admit that he was criminally careless, unpardonably extravagant, and that grave doubts as to his honesty are justified.

But even to the end, Lincoln worked to save him. The order relieving Frémont of his command was dated October 24, 1861. It was sent to General Curtis at St. Louis with very carefully phrased directions: "On receipt of this, with the accompanying enclosure, you will take safe, certain, and suitable measures to have the enclosure addressed to Major-General Frémont delivered to him with all reasonable despatch, subject to these conditions only, that if, when General Frémont shall be reached by the

messenger—yourself or anyone sent by you—he shall then have, in personal command, fought and won a battle, or shall then be actually in battle, or shall be in the immediate presence of the enemy, in expectation of a battle, it is not to be delivered, but held for further orders. After, and not till after, the delivery to General Frémont, let the enclosure to General Hunter be delivered to him.”

But Fortune did not desert Frémont. Before a partial committee made up from members of both Houses of Congress, using evidence which it admitted was incomplete, Frémont won a verdict from a majority approving his administration of the Western Department, and his influential friends kept up a ceaseless agitation and clamor for his reassignment to action in the field. If Lincoln ever had any confidence in the General he had lost it, but his tolerance and forbearance prompted him to yield, and toward the end of March, 1862, while the House Committee was still instigating charges against Army officials, Frémont replaced General Rosecrans in command of a recently created Mountain Department in West Virginia.¹⁸ It was not an important command, but it served to allay the most virulent criticisms for a while. However, it was not in the cards for Frémont to succeed as a commander of armies. He held the new appointment for a few months, until convinced that he did not have the full confidence of his superior, and then he withdrew sullenly to

¹⁸ On November 19, 1862, Frémont wrote Chase regarding the possibility of being restored to his old command west of the Mississippi. “I beg of you to let the subject I have suggested occupy a little of your attention,” he says, and he feels sure that he could serve the President particularly well if given another chance there, “and serving him of course is serving the country” (letter in Chase MS in the Pennsylvania Historical Association Collection, Philadelphia).

New York, there to become the center of a disgruntled faction.

The period was one in which smoldering discontent alternated with excessive criticism, depending upon the success or defeat of the Union troops in the field. The radical Republicans, the War Democrats, and the German element saw in Frémont a prospective leader who might be used to undermine the administration, and they began to lay their plans accordingly. Early in May, 1864, radical Republicans, representing eleven states, sent out invitations to a mass convention to be held in Cleveland on May 31. At the appointed time delegates from sixteen states, many without credentials of any kind, met in Cosmopolitan Hall and nominated Frémont for the presidency. Had he been endowed with political leadership and had he gone into the campaign aggressively he probably could have defeated Lincoln and the Republican party, and a Democratic administration would have been elected. But in doing so he would have been actuated by resentment and personal pique very largely, and to his credit it is recorded that he declined to go through with it. He withdrew from the race and, by so doing, practically brought to a close his political career.

XIII. MEMPHIS, EL PASO AND PACIFIC RAILROAD SCANDALS

After the presidential election of 1864 Frémont turned his attention to private affairs. His first duty was to settle bills which had multiplied in operating the Mariposa estate. Through the graft or mismanagement of his agents it had piled up annual deficits during the war which all but deprived him of his property. When he disposed of his final interest in the estate, however, he was still a rich man, although the amount that remained was but a fraction of his reputed wealth in 1860. The investment of this sum involved him in an enterprise which completed his financial ruin and left another splotch on his name.

The enterprise was one of the uncertain railroad ventures which were common in the trans-Mississippi West during the period. According to his own account his first investment was in the Kansas Pacific. Then he purchased shares of other railroad stocks. And finally he was brought into the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company. This was the concern which led to his undoing.

This company was chartered by the legislature of Texas in February, 1856. According to the provisions of the charter the company was to build a railroad along the thirty-second parallel of latitude from Texarkana on the eastern border of Texas to El Paso on the west. The state was to give the company a grant of land equal to 10,240 acres for each mile of road constructed, and the title of the land was to pass to the company as it completed ten- and twenty-mile sections of the road. The company agreed to survey and sectionalize the lands. When the Civil War commenced it had received subscrip-

tions to a million dollars worth of stock on which two per cent had been paid. It had surveyed the entire route of the proposed road to El Paso. It had surveyed and sectionalized the land to the Colorado River. It had prepared between fifty and seventy miles of road-bed for the rails, and was about to lay these. Later some of the movable property was confiscated by the Confederacy.¹

About 1866 interest in the enterprise was revived, and the Texas legislature extended the charter privileges to the new organization. Frémont joined the company during that year. As an inducement to come in he was given a large block of stock and a commanding interest in the contracts to build the road. The latter promised an attractive remuneration and was a big factor, it seems, in persuading Frémont to join the company.

Early in 1867, the new organization executed two mortgages on its property. A land-grant mortgage on the first one hundred and fifty miles covered the section from Jefferson to Paris, Texas, and was to secure \$5,000,000 in bonds at six per cent, principal and interest to be paid in gold, and the bonds subject to call in 1890. The other was a construction mortgage of the same date—February 14, 1867—which pledged the road-bed, franchises, fixtures, and all other property, except the land, as security for the same one hundred and fifty miles. At the proposed rate of \$16,000 a mile the second mortgage would bring into the treasury of the company an additional sum of \$2,400,000. In December, 1868, another land-grant mortgage was executed for another \$5,000,000 bond issue, the same to be secured by the land along the

¹ A brief history of the road is given in *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle and Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, September 4, 1875.

second one hundred and fifty miles of the prospective road.²

Meanwhile some irregularities had developed in the management of the company. The charter required the main office to be located on the road in Texas, and the by-laws restricted all formal meetings of the directors to that state. Under Texas statutes the by-laws of the company could not be changed except by action of the stockholders, and the place of meeting was never changed through such action. Yet, soon after the first mortgage was executed, the company moved its headquarters to New York. By a resolution of the board of directors passed in Texas, the executive power of the company was placed in the hands of an executive committee of which Frémont soon became the head. It seems that Frémont was never legally chosen president of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company, but as head of the executive committee he was tacitly admitted to that position³ after the resignation of B. H. Epperson in 1869.

The big problem facing the new concern was to find purchasers for its bonds. Probably the company moved its headquarters to New York for that purpose. If so, it failed to accomplish its aim. As there was no market for its securities in America it decided to try to get funds in Europe, and there happened to be available a man with qualities suitable for such an undertaking. This was Henry Probst. He had been engaged in furnishing sup-

² Douglas Campbell, "The Title of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company to the Property of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—Opening Argument before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, 11 April, 1878," Washington, 1878.

³ Douglas Campbell, *op. cit.*

plies to the French troops in Mexico, and the executive committee engaged him to sell bonds of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad in France.

The bonds were to be offered at sixty cents on the dollar and Probst was to receive six per cent commission on all sales made. A little later he sailed for Paris. There followed months of idleness—or at least months during which no favorable report could be made to the executive committee in New York. In the midst of this situation, when it seemed there was no market for the bonds anywhere, there appeared in the *New York Daily Tribune* for Thursday, October 1, 1868, the following advertisement:

Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company's six per cent First Mortgage land bonds, principal and interest payable in coin, for sale at 105, and accrued interest in currency, by Hodgskin, Randal and Hobson, No. 14 Broad St., Corn and Auferman, No. 30 Broad St.⁴

About this time, probably a little later, Probst received attention in France. It seems impossible to fix the time when he first won the interest of M. Paradis, leader on the Paris Bourse and head of important financial publications in France. Evidently the circumstances of meeting, the arrangements made, and the entire transaction were kept secret. Paradis agreed to handle the bonds.

The next step was to have them listed on the Paris Bourse and this was actually accomplished. How was it done? Frémont gives one explanation in a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Pacific Railroad, March 25, 1870.⁵

⁴ For comment on this, see *Congressional Globe*, 41st Congress, Second Session, p. 4732.

⁵ *Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 96*, 41st Congress, Second Session.

The ground upon which this admission [i.e., the admission of the bonds to the Paris Bourse] was asked and obtained by the Memphis and El Paso Company, the reason upon which it was urged in the official correspondence between the company's agent and the French ministry, was that large contracts, to the extent of one hundred engines and forty-five thousand tons of rails, had been made with French builders and foundries; that this would be a new channel for French commerce, and that the opening thus given to French industry merited the favorable consideration and the support of the French government.

To give credence to this explanation Frémont submitted four letters. The first was written from Paris, February 13, 1869, to the Minister of Finance by A. Roechlin and Company, and earnestly solicits the minister's friendly interest in the efforts being made to have the bonds listed on the exchange. The company had entered into a contract with the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad to build locomotives and tenders to the value of "several millions," but the contract would be valid only when the bonds were listed on the Paris Bourse. The other three letters were written by Henry Probst, the first to the Minister of Finance, and the other two to the Minister of State.

The first of these letters, dated March 1, 1870 (obviously it was 1869) and addressed to the Minister of Finance, deserves some attention. It seems that His Excellency was endeavoring to get information about the value of the mortgage bonds, and Probst wrote to suggest a quick and convenient way of accomplishing the purpose.

If Your Excellency feels necessary to wait for such information, I beg to observe that the last French consul-general in New York, the minister plenipotentiary, Baron G. Boilleau, is actually in Paris. Mr. Boilleau left New York only three months since, and now the consulate-general, which Mr. Boilleau has managed ten years, is provisionally conducted by a pupil consul.

It should accordingly be possible for Your Excellency to obtain in Paris, and with little delay, the most complete and most efficient information that could be desired.

Mr. Boilleau, it seems, was a brother-in-law of John Charles Frémont, and we shall see later that he received \$150,000 from the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad for services which he rendered.

The letters to the Minister of State, written March 31 and April 6, 1869, were urgent calls for help. The bonds had been listed by this time, but when Probst attempted to comply with certain formalities which were essential to a completion of the legal requirements, he found other departments of the French government unwilling to accept the data submitted. One director said that "for him the quotations did not exist." In his second letter to the Minister of State, Probst gives an explanation of the methods followed and the character of the securities issued by railroad companies in the United States, and comments at length upon the conservative valuation of the land (\$14 or \$15 an acre) upon which the land-grant mortgage bonds were issued. He wrote :

Allow me, in conclusion, to remind Your Excellency that from the day when the official quotations were announced, the French builders considered their contracts ratified, and immediately commenced their work, those builders having required the execution of the contract, and we have been obliged to deliver the promised bonds. Since that time those bonds have been selling on the Bourse.

The delays in the payment of taxes, occasioned by the act of the stamp office, which refuses to receive our money, might accordingly bring the most injurious consequences, and cause difficulties, the end of which is not easy to foresee.

Both Roechlin and Company and Probst had asserted in their letters that if the bonds were not listed on the

exchange the business of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad would be transferred to England or to Germany. Listing these bonds, in other words, would give France access to a valuable market in the United States.

Frémont submitted these letters to the Committee as his explanation of the methods used in securing a place for his company's bonds on the Paris exchange. But they do not tell the whole story. The laws of France forbade offering securities for sale on the Bourse unless they were regularly sold on the exchanges of the countries from which they came. We have seen that the securities of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad had no market in America. To meet the French law, it seems, certificates were prepared bearing forged names and forged seals, purporting to come from the stock exchange in New York, and asserting that the bonds of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company were quoted and regularly sold on that exchange.⁶ Whether or not the advertisement placed in the *New York Daily Tribune* of October 1, 1868, was used in perpetrating this fraud can only be surmised.

But more glaring misrepresentations were to follow. About the time the bonds were listed on the Bourse an advertising program was undertaken for the purpose of arousing a demand for the securities. A pamphlet was prepared by Lissignol which contained a map entitled "The Railways Belonging to the Company Transcontinental Memphis Pacific." Notice that the title has been

⁶ See Douglas Campbell, "Opening Argument before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives on the Title of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company to the Property of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company," Washington, 1878. Campbell tried to recover something for the French bondholders.

changed. According to information which this map is reported to have contained, the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad owned a continuous line from Norfolk to San Diego. This was of course false. Work on the line from Texarkana to Little Rock and Memphis had just begun, and it was not owned by the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company. The pamphlet asserted that a law had passed Congress in March, 1869, guaranteeing the interest and principal on the construction bonds. This was not true. And the prospective buyers were assured that the company had a perfect title to the land covered by the land-grant mortgage.⁷ James P. Newcomb, Secretary of State in Texas, wrote a letter to Stephen Starter, a Paris stockbroker, who had sold some of the bonds during the summer of 1869, and who later brought suit against Frémont, saying that the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company's title to the lands in Texas was not perfect, and that instead of being worth fourteen or fifteen dollars an acre, as reported, they were worth scarcely a sixth of that amount.⁸

This pamphlet was reproduced in newspapers and magazines in France and was given wide circulation in that country. The Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad—it was advertised as the "Transcontinental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company"—had elegantly

⁷ *Ibid.* See also "The Trans-Continental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—How the Money Was Obtained in France under False Pretense and How It Was Squandered," New York, 1870; *Senate Executive Document No. 59*, 41st Congress, Second Session (1869-1870); and the *Congressional Globe* (June 23, 1870), 41st Congress, Second Session, pp. 4732, 4763 ff.

⁸ "The Trans-Continental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—How the Money Was Obtained in France under False Pretense and How It Was Squandered," New York, 1870.

equipped offices at 51 Chaussée d'Antin, one room of which was devoted entirely to storing and distributing copies of the pamphlet. Frémont was in Paris from June or July to September, 1869, and used these offices constantly, spending a good deal of time there during business hours. He had come to assist in selling the company's bonds.⁹ Of course he knew the content of the pamphlet. There is no evidence that he ever attempted to prevent the information from circulating. On September 18, 1869, he published the following statement: "It is completely false that we have ever declared that our mortgage bonds enjoy a Federal guarantee of 6 per cent interest."¹⁰ Frémont himself may never have made such a statement, but his representatives did. And that is not all. We are practically certain that he sat in the offices of the company at 51 Chaussée d'Antin during that summer of 1869, and saw hundreds of copies of the pamphlet containing this and many other false statements passed out to a gullible public.

In his letter to the Chairman of the Committee on the Pacific Railroad, to which reference has been made, Frémont throws the blame for these misrepresentations upon the house of M. Paradis. "The bonds were put upon the market by this house, upon their own account and for their own profit." But the pamphlet containing the false information was circulated from the office of his company and by his agents.

Again, in this same communication to the Chairman of the Senate Committee, he says:

⁹ "The Trans-Continental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—How the Money Was Obtained in France under False Pretense and How It Was Squandered," New York, 1870.

¹⁰ *Congressional Globe*, 41st Congress, Second Session, pp. 4763 ff.

My inquiries, made after I reached Paris, in the month of July, satisfied me that these representations [he does not call them misrepresentations, yet such they really were] made by purchasers from the Company and their brokers, grew out of misapprehension, very naturally and reasonably to be accounted for by their ignorance of the language and legislative form of the country.

Meanwhile information began to circulate in France which aroused suspicion in many quarters and led to inquiries and investigations which should have been made by the investors before placing their funds in the keeping of such irresponsible agents. As early as May 16, 1869, *La Réforme* advised its readers "not to compromise any part of their savings in an audacious speculation admitted on the official quotation of the Paris Exchange under the title of the 'Transcontinental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company'." This warning was repeated on May 30. After defending its position in refusing to accept advertisements from this concern, and declaring its intention of unveiling intrigues and preventing "shameful speculation" when in its power to do so, *La Réforme* admits: "We have the very deep regret of not having been able to unmask the audacious speculators who have organized the subscriptions to thirty-eight thousand mortgage bonds of the pretended Transcontinental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad in time. The real originators of the speculation have held, and still hold, themselves in the shade. Where is the seat of this company? Who are its directors? . . . With what resources will it meet its immediate engagements?"

There follows an account of Henry Probst's proposed suit for slander against A. Malespine of *La Réforme* for his article of May 16. The article continues:

Ah, they think they are going to compel our silence by intimidation! Well, we have said, and we repeat it, without troubling ourselves about the threats of Mr. Probst, that all and everything in this despicable speculation is scandalous and false!

It is false that you have lands to dispose of as security

It is false, absolutely false, that the Congress of the United States has guaranteed an interest of six per cent on the trans-continental bonds.

You have had the audacity to pretend that your bonds offered to the subscribers more serious guarantees than the six per cent federal.

Dare then to tell us (with proof to support it) at what figure they are quoted on the New York Exchange! You have pushed contempt of all shame so far as to compare, in giving them the name of "similar values," your mortgage bonds with the bonds of the great Illinois railroad and with the Panama railroad.

In a word, you have deceived the French public; you have deceived the syndicate of all the Paris brokers; you have, without doubt, deceived the government the day Mr. Rouher allowed a scandalous article to be published in the official journal, from which we borrow the following:

"To favor and hasten the lines of the plateau of the South, the Congress of the United States has granted divers subsidies. To certain companies a loan has been made in greenbacks, loan redeemable at the Treasury of the United States if the company is unable to pay it, and which is guaranteed by a second mortgage on the road and its material. For other companies Congress has guaranteed purely and simply the interest and the payment of their bonds.

"In this case the number of bonds to be issued by mile is limited by law, and it is the administration of the finances which delivers itself the securities and pays the arrears, reimbursing itself by the company.

"This last kind of subsidy is entirely new in the United States. The Transcontinental Pacific is the only road which has been able to obtain it."

We do not wish to inquire by what deplorable process you have been able to obtain the insertion of so impudent a falsehood in the official journal.

To the article of the official journal, which the *Moniteur des Tirages Financiers* hastened to reproduce, we oppose the following lines, borrowed from the *Messenger* of New York :

"It is known that the Federal Congress has granted to a railroad company, of which Mr. John C. Frémont is one of the organizers, the concession of a route which will bind the city of Memphis, Tennessee, to the Paso del Norte, on the Rio Grande, and the coast of the Pacific, following the thirty-second parallel.

"This company has not received from the government the subsidy in money which was granted to the first Pacific railroad.

"In order to procure the funds necessary for the execution of this enterprise, it has just issued in Paris six per 100 bonds, reimbursable in 1890.

"It is said also that the company had ordered of French workmen a considerable quantity of fixed and rolling stock, paid by means of the product of its loan. It is said that the new bonds are mortgaged on concessions of land made by the United States to the promotion of the enterprise; but this is probably an error, for Congress has never granted anything but the right of way to the company, without adding to it a grant of lands."

The company of the Transcontinental and the *Moniteur des Tirages Financiers* have then deceived the newspapers, the official journal included; they have deceived the syndicate of the brokers; they have deceived the government and the public, but they will not deceive justice.

We defy Mr. Probst—

1st. To prove that the company of the Transcontinental has a regular and legal existence.

2d. That he is qualified to institute judicial action in the name of the company.

3d. That the company is in condition to pay the interest coupon to fall due the 1st of next July, with its income, and not with the capital that the subscribers have just paid over.

4th. That the lands given as security have been conceded, as the advertisements pretend, in virtue of a bill voted by the two chambers of Congress and sanctioned by the President of the United States.

5th. That these lands have a real value of 108,000,000 of francs.

6th. That a bill, or bills, have been voted by Congress authorizing the fusion of the Transcontinental with the lines of Memphis at Chattanooga, at Washington, Baltimore, Norfolk, &c.

7th. That independently of the concessions of land, the federal government has guaranteed an interest of 6 per 100.

Until the agents of the Transcontinental Memphis Pacific have given us full satisfaction, we will maintain, in the name of the public interest, that this affair is a condemnable dupery.¹¹

In his letter to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, sent from the Paris Legation, June 4, 1869, Minister E. B. Washburne included this translation of the article, together with many other letters, advertisements, and documents. "The advertisements," he said, "have appeared in nearly all the newspapers of Paris, besides being placarded all over the city Many inquiries have been made of me by persons who have invested in these bonds, but I am unable to answer them with the exactitude I could wish. I have my own opinion touching this whole business; but I shall guard myself in expressing it until I have correct information, as I do not wish to do any injustice to the company."

Throughout the summer of 1869 Washburne received complaints from angry investors in France and exchanged letters with members of the government at home. Before

¹¹ "Message of the President of the United States Communicating, in Compliance with a Resolution of the 4th [of March, 1870] instant, Correspondence in Regard to the so-called "Transcontinental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company" in *Senate Executive Document No. 59*, 41st Congress, Second Session (1869-1870), 28 pp. This is one of many inclosures which had been sent to the State Department by E. B. Washburne, Minister to France at the time.

the complaints and correspondence ended, the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—or the Transcontinental Memphis-Pacific Railway Company, to use the name adopted by the company in France—had collected \$4,500,000 for its bonds from the French people.

In 1870, when charges were brought against Frémont by Stephen Starter, one of the brokers who had sold the bonds in Paris, there was presented an itemized account¹² of the expenditure of the funds collected from the sale of the bonds. It was as follows:

Commission to J. Paradis, A. G. L. Crampon, and other brokers in Paris, \$150 on each bond.....	\$ 900,000
Commission to Frémont and William Schmoele.....	550,000
Commission to F. Probst and E. Lissignol, \$36 on each bond	215,000
Commission to B. H. Epperson, J. M. Daniels, W. G. Snethen, and other directors.....	150,000
Commission to G. Boilleau, brother-in-law of J. C. Frémont, for services in Paris.....	150,000
Advertisements, maps, pamphlets in France.....	200,000
Office expenses and salaries in Paris, New York, and Texas	60,000
Old debts	150,000
Coupons on bonds	
July, 1869.....	\$ 90,000
January, 1870.....	180,000
To be paid July, 1870.....	180,000
.....	450,000
Stamps and taxes.....	75,000
Lawyers fees	60,000
Miscellaneous expenses	90,000
Road construction	300,000
Stock purchased in Memphis to Little Rock line....	250,000
Purchase charter of S.D. and Arizona R.R. Co.	100,000

¹² "The Trans-Continental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—How the Money Was Obtained in France under False Pretense, and How It Was Squandered," New York, 1870.

7,000 rails from Europe, and freight and duty unpaid. \$	280,000
Locomotives and tenders, freight and duty unpaid....	200,000
	\$4,200,000*
Cash on hand	300,000
	\$4,500,000

* Obviously there was an error in addition as the sum should be \$4,180,000 instead of \$4,200,000 for amounts expended.

When Frémont returned to the United States in the fall of 1869, he went to Washington to secure recognition from Congress. At first the chances seemed good. A bill had been introduced in both Houses soon after Congress opened in December, 1869, chartering a railroad to be called the Southern Transcontinental Railroad Company.¹³ It was to extend from the eastern border of Texas to the Pacific, was to receive large land grants from the United States, and was to be permitted to purchase the franchises, land grants, and any other property of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company. It seems that the new title was given to relieve the organization of the embarrassment it would necessarily experience if it attempted to do business under the old name. Among the corporators were, in the order of their rank, John C. Frémont, John A. C. Gray, E. L. Fancher, M. O. Roberts, and a few others.

The measure soon passed the House, but in the Senate it came up against the bill that body was discussing under

¹³ "The Title of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company to the Property of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company—Opening Argument of Douglas Campbell, Esq., before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, April 11, 1878," Washington, 1878.

the name of the "Texas Pacific Railway," which appeared here for the first time. It had been introduced into the Senate under the title of the Southern Texas Pacific Railway Company by a group hostile to Frémont, but the provisions were similar to those observed in the House bill. It was referred to a committee on Pacific railroads, and there began an examination of the frauds committed on the French public during the summer of 1869. A compromise bill finally passed (Texas Pacific Railway) with a new list of incorporators, but with Frémont's name still at the head of the list. This provoked a heated debate in the Senate, during which Howard of Michigan made a scathing attack upon the scheme because Frémont's name was there.¹⁴ He had campaigned for Frémont in 1856, and had been his loyal supporter afterward, but he had read the material sent by Washburne from France and submitted to the Senate by the President in March, 1870. Howard was chairman of the subcommittee on Pacific railroads to which Frémont had addressed his letter of March 25, 1870, referred to above, and had presided at the testimony given before that committee when it met on April 4. He was familiar with the case.¹⁵ It was with reluctance that he led the attack, and he deserves credit for the stand he took. His charges were supported with factual evidence and they were not answered by his opponents.

How John A. C. Gray developed plans to throw the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad into bankruptcy; how he induced judges and lawyers to co-operate with

¹⁴ *Congressional Globe* (23 June, 1870), 41st Congress, Second Session, pp. 4732 ff., 4763 ff.

¹⁵ See report of that committee, *Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 96*, 41st Congress, Second Session.

him; how he prepared letters, the first requesting the appointment of a receiver for the company and signed by J. M. Daniels (a director and chief engineer of the company), and the second recommending the appointment of John A. C. Gray as the receiver and signed by John C. Frémont; how the scheme was carried out—all this is another story. But it enables one to appreciate Douglas Campbell's comment in his closing argument.

Here are two men [Daniels and Frémont] charged with crime. A receiver of a company is to be appointed, whose first duty it will be to proceed against them for the recovery of money which, according to the allegations of the bill, they have misappropriated [those bringing the suit charged that Frémont and other officers had taken the money]. Into his hands will come the evidence with which it will be his duty to prosecute the criminals, if the allegations of the bill are true. These men recommend to the court the gentleman to whom this delicate mission shall be intrusted, and the court appoints their nominee. I think, gentlemen, you will search far for a parallel to such a proceeding. I think it is the first case in the history of jurisprudence where the criminal has been allowed to select his prosecutor.¹⁶

¹⁶ "Closing Argument, . . . before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives in Regard to the Title of the Texas & Pacific Railway Company to the Property of the Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railway Company," April 24, 1878.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Frémont was one of the incorporators of the Texas Pacific Railway which took over the defunct Memphis, El Paso and Pacific enterprise, but the prestige of the new organization was not strengthened by his affiliation with it. When the receivership of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific corporation terminated in March, 1878, he was glad to withdraw from the railroad business. About this time some of his friends persuaded President Hayes to appoint him governor of the Territory of Arizona.

In some ways the new position was rather fortunate for Frémont. It took him away from the unpleasant environment of his recent business failures, and the undeveloped territory in the West offered numerous projects upon which his imagination could play (such as irrigation from storage reservoirs, developing the mining resources of the country, building railroads), while the exchequer was never large enough to enable him to squander money on them. And so he spent four years dreaming and making recommendations on behalf of impractical schemes, while he attempted to adjust his living expenses to his meager salary of two thousand dollars a year. His administration added nothing to any prestige which his most ardent admirer could have thought he possessed in the field of political administration, but it may have helped him to realize that he was in no way suited to work of that kind.

With his retirement from the governorship of Arizona Frémont's public career ended. It seems impossible to review certain phases of that career without reaching unpleasant conclusions. The evidence collected by the House Committee at St. Louis revealing the grave irregularities

practiced in the management of the Western Department in the summer of 1861, and the questionable methods used to market the bonds of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company in Paris during the summer of 1869 have left an indelible stain on the reputation and character of the man. His friends, however, have refused to believe the charges brought against him, and his biographers have been inclined to ignore the facts.

Such an attitude cannot be satisfactorily defended. If the available data have any significance at all they prove indubitably that Frémont must share the offensive stigma which comes from the corrupt practices associated with those two episodes. At St. Louis he signed orders for the payment of money to men who collected exorbitant sums from the government for services which they never rendered. He made contracts for supplies at prices which were outrageous, even at that time, and he supported at least one firm in St. Louis that deliberately plundered the government. The purchases of horses and cattle which he ordered during the hectic days of 1861 suggest, in crude form, some of the corrupt practices which are associated with the activities of members of the Continental Oil Company of a more recent period. He may not have prepared the numerous false statements which were scattered throughout France during the summer of 1869 to advertise the bonds of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad, but he must bear a good deal of the responsibility for their continued circulation, since he made no effort to reveal the falsehood contained in those advertisements until the money had been raised from the sale of the bonds.

These charges are based on facts which seem definitive. No amount of sympathetic camouflaging, no prolonged

flow of sentimental oratory, no protracted effort at sarcastic pooh-poohing can weaken their effectiveness, subtract from their implication, or destroy their significance.¹

This does not mean that Frémont should be placed among the rogues and scamps that infested the putrid business régime following the Civil War. He was not a George Opdyke, a Morris Ketchum, a Jay Gould, or a Jim Fisk. He was not a scoundrel. He was morally careless rather than deliberately criminal in his intentions. He sometimes initiated movements or sponsored undertakings without realizing their trend, and gave to irresponsible men the responsibility for carrying them to completion. When the corrupt methods practiced were uncovered by investigating committees his loyalty to his own agents outweighed any normal resentment he should have had for their offensive conduct, and he supported and defended their shady proceedings or their criminal acts. He was more loyal to men than he was to principles.

After all, Frémont's career is not difficult to explain, and its explanation will give a basis for understanding his occasionally loose moral outlook on life.

His career developed naturally. He was something of a vagrant by instinct—one might almost say a vagabond. His earliest days were spent drifting about the country in the care of somewhat shiftless parents. The habit of drifting came to him early in life. Any fixed intentions he may have had when he entered school were soon undermined by this habit, and he was expelled. He even rejoiced at his expulsion because he could then drift unhampered by academic obligations or tutorial discipline. He joined the Navy because he thought it would give him an opportunity

¹ When the subject was discussed in the Senate these methods were used to answer the charges.

to satisfy his desire for wandering, and he resigned when he found the deck of a vessel too confining. He became an explorer because that particular employment afforded him an opportunity for drifting over vast, uninhabited areas, and, accompanied by companions of similar tastes, he spent several years engaged in this congenial occupation. The last of his official expeditions took him to California, where he drifted into misunderstandings with Castro. He drifted into the Bear Flag revolt in California, and into the annoying complications which followed—the union with Stockton, the quarrel with Kearny, the affray with Mason, the ownership of the Mariposa estate, and the court-martial. He drifted into prominence through the timeliness of his explorations, and the recognition he received led to his nomination for the presidency by the new Republican party in 1856. Between a half and a third of his married life was spent in drifting from home and drifting back again.

His entire career was built largely on a series of circumstances over which he exercised little or no control.

Morally Frémont was a loose constructionist. He adjusted his moral outlook very largely to the environment in which he lived. He was in sympathy with the abolition movement primarily because he spent most of his life in the midst of people and conditions opposed to slavery. He commended scalp-taking even as an explorer, and praised Carson and Godey when they returned from an attack on Indians with gory trophies dangling from the ends of their guns. In the campaign of 1856, in the midst of a crusader's environment, he became a loyal supporter of the new Republican party, and the song-writers of that day used his name as a synonym for freedom. Thrown into the disorder and laxness created by conditions of war

a little later, he moved from one extreme to the other—from the humanitarian position of inditing a proclamation to free slaves to the position of signing orders permitting graft and corruption. Entering the depraved business era after the Civil War, he readily adjusted himself to the lawless practices of that period.

As the chameleon's skin takes on the color of the particular object which it touches, so Frémont's habits and actions were peculiarly determined by the influences under which he lived.

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Materials on Frémont's public career may be found in his biographies; in accounts of his explorations made during the 'forties and the 'fifties; in the various histories of California covering the American conquest of that territory; in the accounts of the presidential election of 1856; in the history of the early military operations in Missouri during the Civil War; and in the histories and documents of Arizona for the period of his governorship, 1878 to 1882.

BIOGRAPHIES

There were three campaign biographies of Frémont which attracted attention in 1856, besides various newspaper and magazine narratives which were widely read. Samuel M. Smucker (or Schmucker), *The Life of Col. John Charles Frémont, and His Narrative of Explorations and Adventures in Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and California, the Memoir by Samuel M. Smucker, A.M.* (New York, 1856; another edition, 1860), contains a brief laudatory biographical sketch followed by extended selections from Frémont's own narratives of his explorations. More satisfactory volumes are Charles Wentworth Upham, *Life, Explorations and Public Service of John Charles Frémont* (Boston, 1856); and John Bigelow, *Memoir of the Life and Public Service of John Charles Frémont, Including an Account of His Explorations, Discoveries and Adventures on Five Successive Expeditions across the North American Continent; Voluminous Selections from His Private and Public Correspondence; His Defence before the Court-Martial, and Full Reports of His Principal Speeches in the Senate of the United States* (New York, 1856). The last is the most important of the three because it contains a number of valuable documents. Of the three more recent biographies Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *Frémont and '49; the Story of a Remarkable Career and Its Relations to the Exploration and Development of Our Western Territory, Especially California* (New York, 1914), is the best on Frémont's explora-

tions; Herbert Bashford and Harr Wagner, *A Man Unafraid, the Story of John Charles Frémont* (privately published, 1927), is an uncritical presentation, in fulsome praise, of one who is obviously a hero in the minds of the author and publisher; and Allan Nevins, *Frémont, the West's Greatest Adventurer, Being a Biography from Certain Hitherto Unpublished Sources of General John C. Frémont together with His Wife Jessie Benton Frémont and Some Account of the Period of Expansion Which Found a Brilliant Leader in the Pathfinder* (2 vols., New York, 1928). The last is the most ambitious attempt made, and the most interesting account presented. The "West's Greatest Adventurer" is an unfortunate sub-title, and the work shows some influence of the family papers, to which the author was the first to have complete access. This work and Dellenbaugh's volume contain valuable bibliographies.

EXPLORATIONS

The biographies give accounts of Frémont's explorations. Dellenbaugh is particularly good. He traveled over the country and has made a critical study of Frémont's routes, correcting mistakes in the Reports occasionally and clearing up ambiguous passages which sometimes occur. But the Reports themselves provide the most satisfactory source of information. Those of the first two official expeditions were published by the government and were in sufficient demand to induce a dozen or more private concerns in this country and abroad to reprint them. An account of the third official expedition may be found in Frémont, *Memoirs of My Life, Including in the Narrative Five Journeys of Western Exploration during the Years 1842, 1843-44, 1845-46-47, 1848-49, 1853-54, together with a Sketch of the Life of Senator Benton in Connection with Western Expansion by Jessie Benton Frémont, a Retrospect of Fifty Years Covering the Most Eventful Periods of Modern American History* (1887). The title is misleading, because only one volume of the work was published. The first three chapters give an unsatisfactory account of Frémont's early life; chapters four to eleven are taken almost verbatim from his Reports of the first two official expeditions; chapters twelve to fifteen give an account of the third expedition and

of the author's part in the conquest of California; and a final entitled "Chapter of Results" concludes the work. His account of the conquest of California should be used with considerable caution.

Frémont's account of his fourth expedition is given in letters written to his wife and to Senator Benton, which may be found in Bigelow's *Life of Colonel Frémont* (1856), pp. 359-378; also in Jessie Benton Frémont and Lieutenant Francis Preston Frémont, "Great Events during the Lives of Major-General John C. Frémont . . . and of Jessie Benton Frémont," MS in the Family Papers now in the Bancroft Library. Thomas B. Martin, "Narrative of John C. Frémont's Expedition to California in 1845-46, and Subsequent Events in California Down to 1853, Including Frémont's Exploring Expedition of 1848," MS in the Bancroft Library, contains material on the third and fourth expeditions. "The Fort Sutter Papers," MS in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, are really the long-lost papers of Edward Kern and should be known as the Kern Papers. They were arranged in thirty-nine volumes by the enterprising dealer who sold them, sometimes a letter or two covering from one to four pages of ordinary letter-size paper constituting a volume. The entire thirty-nine volumes have been edited in one by Seymour Dunbar. These contain some valuable information on the fourth expedition (see Lieutenant J. H. Simpson's "Journal"—or extracts from—in Volume XXXI, MS, p. 126). For further information on this expedition see the following: Micajah McGehee, "Rough Times in Rough Places. A Personal Narrative of the Terrible Experiences of Frémont's Fourth Expedition," in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. XIX, New Series, pp. 771-780; M. N. O., "Résumé of Frémont's Expedition," *ibid.*; Breckenridge in the *Cosmopolitan* for August 1896; and Alexander Godey's letter in the *New York Evening Post*, October 30, 1856.

The material on the fifth expedition is meager, but it is adequate for a summing up of this least important of Frémont's explorations. S. N. Carvalho, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West; with Col. Frémont's Last Expedition across the Rocky Mountains; Including Three Months Residence in Utah, and a Perilous Trip across the American Desert to the Pacific* (1858), is frequently quoted. Carvalho was the artist of

the fifth expedition and an ardent admirer of Frémont. The latter's *Letter to the Editors of the National Intelligencer Communicating Some General Results of a Recent Winter Expedition across the Rocky Mountains for the Survey of a Route for a Railroad to the Pacific* (December 1854) gives Frémont's own account of the expedition. It may be found also in *House Miscellaneous Document No. 8*, 33d Congress, Second Session, and in *Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 67*, 33d Congress, First Session, Vol. XIII, serial No. 705.

CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

Materials on the conquest of California are too extensive to permit listing even in a work of this character. Some information on the subject will be found in works given above. Among the secondary authorities H. H. Bancroft, *History of California* (7 vols., 1884-1890), Vol. V, is valuable. Robert Glass Cleland, *The Early Sentiment for the Annexation of California: An Account of the Growth of American Interest in California from 1835 to 1846* (1915), gives a scholarly treatment of the background of the conquest. In his *A History of California: the American Period* will be found a good brief account of the conquest by Dr. Cleland. Cardinal Goodwin, *The Trans-Mississippi West* (1922), contains a chapter summarizing the growth of American influence in California through the conquest. Irving B. Richman, *California under Spain and Mexico, 1535-1847* (1911), is fairly good. Two other works are: Theodore H. Hittell, *History of California* (4 vols., 1885-1897); and Franklin Tuthill, *The History of California* (1866). Josiah Royce's *California, from the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco* (1856), *A Study of American Character* (1886), together with his articles in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. XIX, new series, and in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. LXVI, should be studied. J. R. Thompson of New Jersey delivered a speech before the Senate of the United States on August 9, 1856, in which he built up a strong case against Frémont. Some of his material was taken from letters in *Niles's Register*, LXXI, 173, 191, and LXXIII, 110-111.

James Madison Cutts, *The Conquest of California and New*

Mexico, by the Forces of the United States, in the Years 1846 and 1847 (1847), is made up largely of letters, valuable papers, and documents on the subject. Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California: Being the Journal of a Tour by the Emigrant Route and South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, across the Continent of North America, the Great Desert Basin, and through California, in the Years 1846, 1847* (1848), was written by an officer in Frémont's battalion. *The California Historical Society Quarterly*, which began in San Francisco in July 1922, announced in the first number its intention of publishing a series of documents relating to the conquest of California in 1846. Those published to date are rather closely associated with the Bear Flag revolt. John Bidwell, "Frémont in the Conquest of California," in the *Century Magazine* for February 1891 is good. Bidwell participated in the events recorded and is considered one of the most prominent and respected of California's early citizens. Simeon Ide, *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William Brown Ide: with a Minute and Interesting Account of One of the Largest Emigrating Companies . . . from the East to the Pacific Coast, and . . . Account of "the Virtual Conquest of California in June, 1846, by the Bear Flag Party," as Given by Its Leader, the Late Hon. William Brown Ide* (1880), is suggestive. John Bassett Moore (ed.), *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence* (12 vols., 1908-1911); Volumes VI and VII contain some important documents dealing with California, including Buchanan's letter appointing Larkin secret agent in California.

Several volumes of manuscript material from the Bancroft Collection in Berkeley, California, on the conquest of that territory, might be compiled, but only a few important titles can be mentioned here. Among these are the following: Juan Bautista Alvarado, "Historia de California," MS, 5 vols. (Vol. V covers the period from 1842 to 1847 and is decidedly prejudiced against Frémont); "History of California as Dictated . . . by Major Salvador Vallejo," MS (is bitter against Frémont); "New Helvetia Diary of Events from 1845 to 1848, by Swasey, Bidwell, Tooker, Sutter," MS (this is a copy of the original which is in the Collection of the Pioneer Society in San Francisco); John Bidwell, "California, 1841-48; an Immigrant's Recollection of a

Trip across the Plains and of Men and Events in Early Days, Including the Bear Flag Revolt," MS; General John Augustus Sutter, "Personal Reminiscences," MS; Jacob P. Leese, "Papers on the Bear Flag, Including Memoranda on the Capture by the Bear Party of Sonoma Town, and Treatment of the Prisoners, etc." MS; William Baldrige, "The Days of 1846," MS; William Hargrave, "California in 1846 as Related by William Hargrave of Napa in Conversation with Ivan Petroff," MS; John Fowler, "The Bear Flag Revolt in California, 1846," MS. "The Fort Sutter Papers," MS copy (or the Kern Papers) already listed, contain material furnished by Kern, who was the artist of Frémont's third expedition; Thomas S. Martin, "John C. Frémont's Expedition to California in 1845-46, and Subsequent Events in California Down to 1853, Including Frémont's Exploring Expedition of 1848," MS; *Official Correspondence of Thomas S. Larkin, U.S. Consul at Monterey, California, and Later U.S. Navy Agent, 1844-49* (2 vols.).

The above-listed manuscript materials are in the Bancroft Collection in Berkeley, California. The following are in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California: "The Leidesdorff Papers," MS (cover the period from February 1, 1840, to October 14, 1867); Henry L. Oak, "Frémont and the Conquest of California," MS (makes a strong case against Frémont); Edward M. Kern, "Unpublished Notebook of 1848-1851," MS (7 vols.); and Jessie Benton Frémont, "Secret Affairs of the Mexican War," MS.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1856

Accounts of the first presidential election of the present Republican party may be found in the biographies of Frémont written by Dellenbaugh and Nevins and in such general works as James Schouler, *History of the United States of America*, Vol. V; James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*, Vol. II; John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, Vol. VIII; and Theodore Clarke Smith, *Parties and Slavery, 1850-1859* (Vol. XVIII in the *American Nation; a History*, edited by Albert Bushnell Hart). Edward Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency, from 1788 to 1897*, gives a brief account including the party platforms

and the result of the election. Kirk H. Porter, *National Party Platforms* (1924), gives the platforms of the four political parties participating in the election of 1856. Benjamin F. Hall, *The Republican Party and Its Candidates: . . . with Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Frémont and Dayton* (New York, 1856), is really a campaign document which attempts to give historical justification for the formation of the new Republican party and strongly commends that party's choice of candidates.

But the real spirit of the election of 1856 is not to be found in the biographies of the candidates nor in the histories of the period. To get this, one must turn to the public press of the day. The violence and extent of the sentiment are easily surmised even by a cursory examination of the contemporary publications. Not in the metropolitan papers alone but in the small town press as well interest in the election is paramount and the tenseness of the feeling revealed.

FRÉMONT AND THE CIVIL WAR

Frémont played but a minor part in the Civil War, and the material discussing or appraising his work is meager. In the general histories cited above will be found brief estimates of his leadership in Missouri and in Virginia. To these should be added John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (12 vols., 1905). The following histories of Missouri contain information on the subject: Walter Bickford Davis and Daniel S. Durrie, *An Illustrated History of Missouri* (1876); Col. William S. Switzler, *Illustrated History of Missouri from 1541-1881* (1881); Lucien Carr, *Missouri, a Bone of Contention* (American Commonwealth Series); and Eugene Morrow Violette, *A History of Missouri*. The first two are old and popular works, the third more valuable, and the last is the work of a scholar who is familiar with his sources. Of course it is a general work and treats the Civil War in Missouri very briefly. The best study of the period which has been made is Fred Albert Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army*, (2 vols., Cleveland, 1928). John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy, Its Origin and History* (1886), contains Frémont's emancipation proclamation and the correspondence between the President and the General which followed. There are a few other

letters given in the volume. James Peckham, *General Nathaniel Lyon and Missouri in 1861; A Monograph of the Great Rebellion* (1866); and Thomas L. Snead, *The Fight for Missouri from the Election of Lincoln to the Death of Lyon* (1886), are both valuable for the period they cover. W. J. Tenney, *The Military and Naval History of the Rebellion in the United States* (1866), contains some official letters on the war in Missouri, most of them written by Frémont. Samuel B. Harding, "Missouri Party Struggles in the Civil War Period," in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (1900, Vol. I, pp. 87-103), gives good material for the political background of Frémont's activity in Missouri. Edward C. Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (1927), contains a few short appraisals of Frémont's part in the struggle. In "Campaigns in Virginia, 1861-1862" in Theodore F. Dwight (ed.), *Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*, Vol. I, will be found a few brief comments on Frémont's work as commander in Virginia.

Material on phases of the struggle may be found in *Historical Pamphlets on the War of Secession*, 7 vols., in the library of the University of California at Berkeley. See Vol. V, for example, Charles D. Drake's "Camp Jackson: Its History and Significance" and the "Reply of Lieut.-Col. Pilsen to Emil Schalk's 'Criticism of the Campaign in the Mountain Department, under Maj.-Gen. J. C. Frémont'." The last is a scathing attack on Schalk and a defense of Frémont's campaign in Virginia. *The Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War* (in 3 parts, 1863) and the *Official Records on the War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* are indispensable.

RAILROAD ACTIVITIES

The following materials deal with the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company.

"Messages of the President of the United States, Communicating, in Compliance with a Resolution of the 4th Instant, Correspondence in Regard to the So-called 'Transcontinental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company'," March 10, 1870, in *Senate Executive Document No. 59*, 41st Congress, Second Session (1869-1870), (28 pp.), contains the information sent to the

State Department by E. B. Washburne from Paris during the summer of 1869, and includes a translation of an article from *La Réforme* of May 30, 1869, letters, copy of a pamphlet, correspondence carried on between Washburne and the Department of State, and other data on the subject. This was material which the investigating committee, headed by Howard of Michigan, used. "Letter of J. C. Frémont, President of Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company, to the Chairman of the Committee on the Pacific Railroad, communicating a statement in relation to the affairs of said company," March 25, 1870, in *Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 96*, 41st Congress, Second Session. This is Frémont's letter to Howard giving the former's story of the method used in listing the company's bonds on the Paris Bourse. He included copies of four letters, one from a French firm and three from Henry Probst, all of which supported his point of view. "The sub-committee of the Pacific Railroad Committee, to whom was referred, for the purpose of investigation, a bill 'incorporating the Southern Transcontinental Railway Company and granting the right of way to lands in aid of its construction,' presented to their committee a report, accompanied by the testimony and statements laid before them" (April 22, 1870) in *Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 121*, 41st Congress, Second Session. A good account of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company and the various acts under which it was formed, with the committee's opinion as to that company's right to the title of the land granted by the Texas legislature. The committee thought the title was not good. Over 90 pages are given to repeating questions and answers of committee and witnesses in the process of examination. *The Congressional Globe*, 41st Congress, Second Session (June 22 to July 15, 1870), pp. 4730-33, 4763 ff., gives the debates in Congress, Howard leading the opposition to Frémont. See also *The Title of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company to the Property of the Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company. Opening argument of Douglas Campbell, Esq., before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, April 11, 1878*. Later angles to the story are traced in this and Gray's part is given. *The Trans-Continental Memphis, El Paso and Pacific Railroad Company. How the Money Was Obtained in France under False Pretense and How It Was Squandered* (New York, 1870) (pamphlet, 21 pages,

E. Wells Sackett, Stationer and Book Job Printer, in New York Public Library). Contains names of officers and directors and agents in Paris, copies of several of original letters, correspondence between Stephen Starter and government officials in Washington and Texas. See also *Senate Reports No. 212*, 41st Congress, Second Session, and *New York Daily Tribune*, October 1, 1868.

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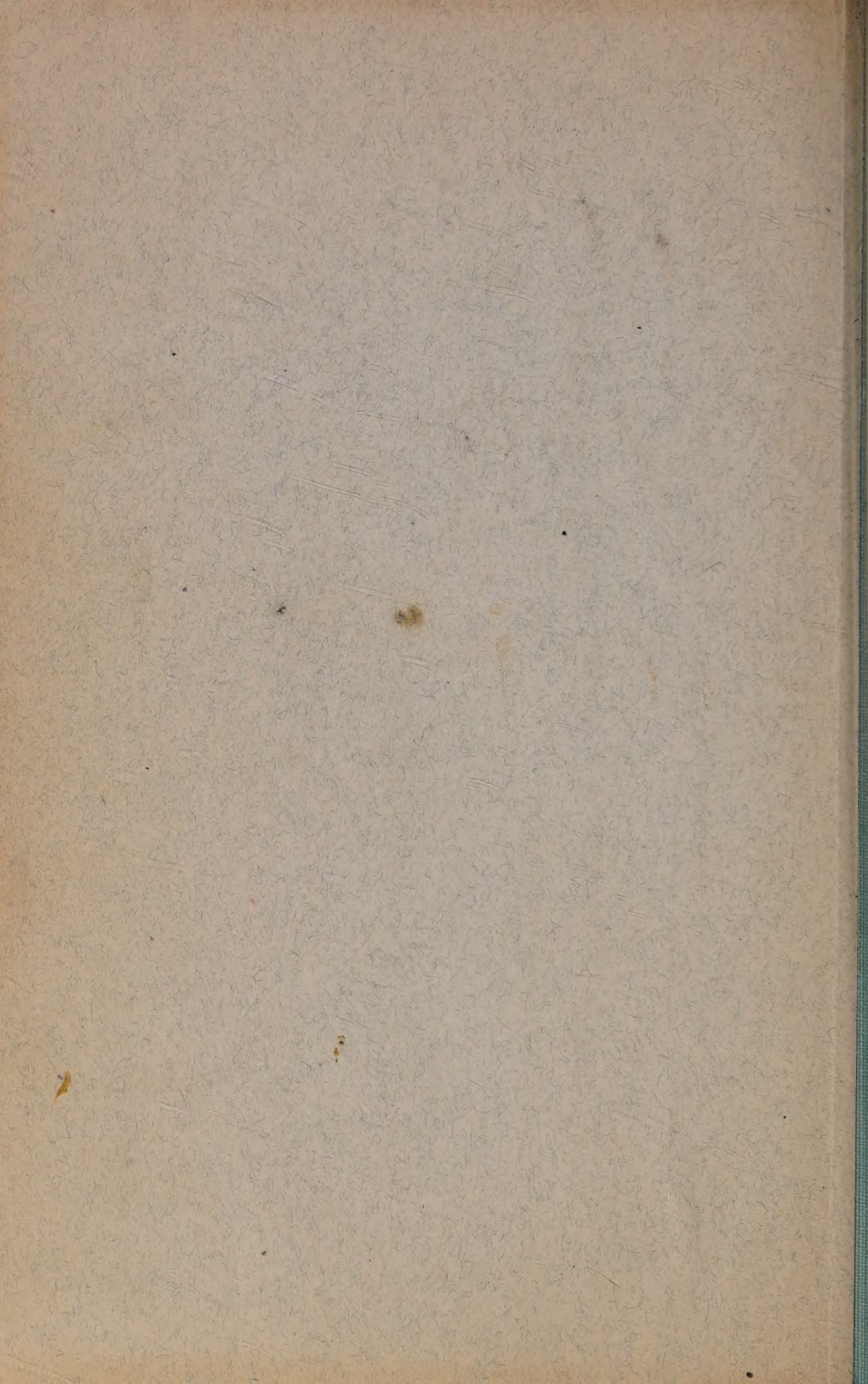
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